

COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2024





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Kate Garvey

Thank you for reviewing the Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2024. This report highlights the work we do daily to support Alexandrians in meeting their needs and achieving their goals. Our services span the entire life cycle—from early childhood to aging services—and address key life domains including behavioral health, economic security, housing stability and physical safety.

Alexandria is a community built on kindness, creativity, and generosity. Residents share their time and talents to support one another. The work of nonprofit organizations, volunteers, and our dedicated DCHS staff ensures that essential services are delivered and that we are able to respond to the evolving needs of our city.

The challenges we face are not unique to Alexandria. Families across the nation struggle with the high costs of housing, food, and childcare. Young people continue to face pressures affecting their safety and well-being. Mental health and substance use disorders impact Alexandrians of all ages and require comprehensive treatment approaches.

In this report, you will see how we have responded to these challenges, serving more than 40,000 Alexandrians through strong partnerships and innovative approaches. Our goal is to ensure that all residents experience well-being, safety, and self-sufficiency.

This work would not be possible without the significant support of the Mayor and City Council, the City Manager's Office, our Boards and Commissions, City and nonprofit partners, the community, our many volunteers and remarkable staff. We are deeply grateful for your commitment to this important work.

MISSION

The Department of Community and Human Services provides effective and essential safety net services that measurably improve or maintain the quality of life for Alexandrians.

VISION

The Department of Community and Human Services envisions a community in which residents enjoy a sense of well-being, safety and self-sufficiency.



OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR



The Alexandria Fund for Human Services (AFHS) provides grant funding to organizations that address human service needs for Alexandrians across the lifespan and that advance conditions in their environments, in alignment with the DCHS mission, to ensure well-being, safety, self-sufficiency and resilience through equitable processes, practices and outcomes.

AFHS grantees provide support to individuals and households along five Council-approved outcomes:

- 1. All children and youth are school ready, this includes young children 0 to 5 (889 individuals served and 654 households)
- 2. All Alexandrians are socially connected, emotionally secure and culturally competent (707 individuals and 623 households)
- 3. All Alexandrians are economically secure and career ready (3,542 individuals and 2,577 households)
- 4. All Alexandrians have access to physical, dental, mental health and vision

resources and services (2,235 individuals and 1,944 households)

5. All Alexandrians are assisted in and empowered to prevent and remedy crises including food insecurity, eviction and financial crises (13,784 individuals and 12,680 households) with an additional single grantee that leveraged AFHS funding to provide 48,450 individuals and 11,180 households with supplemental food assistance.



ALEXANDRIA FUND for HUMAN SERVICES



Organizational Development and Equity (ODE) The Office of Organizational Development and Equity (ODE) and the Racial Equity Core Team (RECT) curated a culture of active allyship and solidarity in the Department. The Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) and White Allies for Racial Equity (WARE) caucuses organized monthly sessions to provide support, guidance, resources and tools for staff navigating their racial equity learning journey. ODE operationalized racial equity by co-strategizing with Service Never Sleeps to begin implementing a training series for building racial equity. ODE also began the groundwork of exploring possibilities for co-governance with residents with lived experience of racial inequity.



Quality Assurance and Health Information Management led the Department through multiple, audits to renew Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services licensing. Audits primarily focused on substance use treatment and intellectual and developmental disability services. Corrective action in cited areas was implemented and the licenses were renewed for another year.

The Communications Team managed the strategic delivery of behavioral health and human service information and promoted a range of internal and external initiatives. The team provided multi-lingual outreach through collaboration with community partners and faith-based groups and through such platforms as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), the City website, the Spanish text line, the Connect newsletter, eNews, news releases, flyers and other print and digital assets. Communications responded to media requests to generate stories, administered a range of surveys to obtain input from the community on DCHS plans and services, and facilitated timely responses to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.



Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center recognized 40 years of service to the community. The non-profit group of volunteers provides financial assistance to DCHS clients with mental health conditions, substance dependency and intellectual disabilities. Friends managed \$96,891.88 in contributions and fulfilled 250 requests for assistance with education, rent, utilities, medication and more. Members worked with the Department's Aging and Adult Services to implement a system for financially supporting clients who use Senior Taxi and extended support to eligible clients involved in the juvenile legal system whose

families participate in behavioral health or social services.



CENTER FOR ECONOMIC SUPPORT (CES)



Alexandria Recurring Income for Success and Equity (ARISE), the City of Alexandria's guaranteed income pilot, continued to make monthly payments of \$500 to the 75 study participants. City council voted to extend the payments to participants for an additional five months, for a total of 29 months, through June 2025. Evaluation results of the first year of ARISE will be released in fall 2024.

DCHS Customer Relations assisted 21,429 callers and responded to 32,369 walk-in requests from clients seeking multilingual support to complete applications, resolve Public Benefits case inquiries, and assess urgent needs. They also provided referrals to community resources and facilitated connections to other programs for shelter, food, medical assistance, and more.

Through the 2024 Annual Point in Time Count, a one-night snapshot of the number of persons experiencing homelessness as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD), 187 people were identified in the city, an increase of 23% from 2023, attributed to loss of resources and policies established during the pandemic.

The Economic Opportunity Commission and the Office of Community Services (OCS) published the <u>Alexandria Community Needs Assessment</u>, summarizing the scope of the City of Alexandria's challenges in specified areas and proposing potential solutions. Areas included childcare, employment, food security, healthcare and housing.

The Eviction Prevention Taskforce's Housing Legislative Advocacy

Committee, comprised of community members and local, regional, and state stakeholders, celebrated the passage of three key bills, signed into law on July 1, 2024. The laws require 1) translation of critical housing documents to five non-English languages; 2) clearer disclosure of fees in rental agreements; 3) expungement of eviction records automatically, thereby reducing the burden on tenants to have to file additional paperwork or attend hearings after resolving their eviction issues.

Tenant Education and Community Outreach, led by Legal Services of Northern Virginia and working in collaboration with (OCS), created a Courthouse Navigation handout to guide at-risk households through the court process. The group supported more than 1,000 families with expunging their record.

DCHS' Food Security Advancement Initiative published the Food Insecurity Report: Understanding the Disparities and Experiences of Hunger Across the City of Alexandria, offering critical insights into the barriers and challenges faced by residents experiencing food insecurity. The initiative also strengthened coordination with community partners to enhance outreach and connect eligible residents to SNAP benefits and other vital community food resources, fostering greater access to nutritious food for residents.

The Free Income Tax Preparation Program served 391 low-income taxpayers and completed returns for 368 taxpayers who received \$369,320 in net federal refunds. These refunds included \$169,478 in Earned Income Credit. At an average

cost of \$268 for preparing tax returns, these taxpayers also saved \$98,624 in tax preparation fees. This program was supported by 26 tax program volunteers with a total of 897 hours worked in the program.





The Work-Based Learning (WBL) Program, funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), concluded in August 2024, achieving a 100% placement rate with all 148 city residents placed in a meaningful work experience. This 12-week program allowed participants to apply their skills and knowledge in real-world settings. Participants earned while learning and developed essential soft skills. They also expanded their professional network and were exposed to new technologies. Of the 148 participants, 89 transitioned into employment (a 60% permanent placement rate), earning an average wage of \$23.27 per hour.

The Workforce Development Center (WDC) was recognized by Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area as a distinguished partner, underscoring its role in helping individuals move toward self-sufficiency. Of the 40 individuals WDC placed with LSSNCA for work experience, 20 transitioned to permanent positions earning an average wage of \$23.14 per hour



PEOPLE SERVED



The Dental, Vision and Hearing Care Program served 50 Alexandrians, providing them with services in more than 200 appointments.

256

Summer Youth Employment Program participants 291

Employment workshops and 56 hiring events

623

Clients placed into jobs with average full-time wage of \$18.10/hour

8,212

Career Center and Youth Career Academy visits

ALEXANDRIA COMMUNITY SHELTER AND WINTER SHELTER

Sheltering individuals and families; providing linkage to case managers, job specialists, housing locators and other support. Offering nightly shelter and a meal at Carpenter's Shelter during hypothermia season and screenings for those seeking longer term shelter.



1,091
Households Stabilized

EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE

Providing households with financial assistance for such needs as security deposits and housing stability and offering homeless prevention services.



BENEFITS

Helping clients access SNAP food assistance, Medicaid health care and TANF for those in need of temporary financial assistance.

44,123
served





CENTER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES



The ALX Preschool Network launched, allowing families to apply for placement in one of 16 preschool locations using a single application. This initiative enhances the parent experience in meeting their childcare and education needs and helps the City maximize federal and local funding resources for these services.

The Early Childhood Wellness Team provided quality review observations and professional development services for 338 preschool classrooms that included 32 Alexandria City Public School classrooms, 50 family day home classrooms and 256 center-based classrooms. Supports were offered in English, Spanish, Amharic and Urdu.

Child Protective Services (CPS) achieved a 100% success rate for absence of recurring abuse of children at the end of FY24. This indicates that over the previous two years, 100% of children with a previous founded disposition of abuse/neglect who received services from CPS did not experience another finding of maltreatment. The state goal is 94.6%. CPS also conducted 14 child abuse prevention trainings including mandated reporting and CPS procedures, educating 746 community members.

Child & Family Behavioral Health Services noted a 15% increase in walk-in clinical assessments, a 32% decrease in median wait for service and a 61% increase in services provided at the Northern Virginia Juvenile Detention Center. One hundred percent of youth and families surveyed reported they were getting the help they needed; 99% reported they were always treated with respect. As one teen wrote of CFBHS services, "it's like a guide to life."

The Fund for Alexandria's Child, supported by an advisory council of five volunteer members, raised \$78,142 for children in foster care and those at risk for out of home placement to participate in activities that help to normalize their lives, such as athletic teams, dance classes, holiday gift sharing, prom, graduation celebrations, and transportation to jobs and medical appointments.

Holiday Sharing Program sponsors made it possible for 341 families to select toys at the Community Toy Drive organized with Volunteer Alexandria. The Toy Drive included pictures with Santa, arts and crafts and a hot chocolate bar. An additional 1,753 children and youth received gifts, clothing, books and gift cards. Generous donors also made the holidays brighter for 91 children and teens in foster care, and 125 adults with a disability received grocery gift cards.

The 10th Annual Youth Leadership Conference hosted 46 emerging young leaders by providing training and connecting them to resources in the community.

The Alexandria Youth Ambassadors, a group of high school students who support community engagement efforts focused on anti-violence, trauma healing and social emotional learning, organized the City of Alexandria's inaugural Youth and Caring Adult Summit.

The Seventh Annual Alexandria Pride Fair at City Hall in Market Square saw more than 1,000 people in attendance and 60 programs and businesses tabling. 100% of attendees surveyed agreed that Alexandria Pride demonstrated that LGBTQ+ people and their rights are valued.

The Domestic Violence Program handled 2,759 hotline calls and supported 51 adults and 41 children in the Safehouse with the help of 41 volunteers. The program provided advocacy services for 958 adults and started a women's empowerment group at the adult detention center.



PEOPLE SERVED



748 Served | CHILD AND FAMILY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Providing assessment, care coordination, case management, peer family support, and treatment services in schools, the juvenile detention center, DCHS offices, the Center for Alexandria's Children, and in the community to ensure access and streamlined services.

613 Developmental Screenings | PARENT INFANT EDUCATION PROGRAM

Providing universal developmental screening to help identify children who may have early learning needs before they enter the classroom.

879 Calls | 24 HOUR SEXUAL ASSAULT HOTLINE

Providing multi-lingual crisis intervention to victims affected by intimate partner violence and sexual assault. Services include information on safety and referrals to legal and social services, housing, and childcare providers.





771 Trained | LGBTQ+ TASK FORCE

Offering training to service providers on how to build safe and inclusive services for LGBTQ+ people.

184 Service Reviews | CHILDREN'S SERVICES ACT UNIT

Working to keep the city's most vulnerable young people in their community for behavioral health care. Of the clients served, 90% participated in treatment at home in community-based settings as opposed to residential programs.



16,872 Engaged | YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Youth Development, the Alexandria Campaign on Adolescent Pregnancy and the Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition of Alexandria engaged 16,872 youth and adults through evidence-based programs, support services and educational programs.

459 Family Assessments & Investigations | CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Receiving and responding to concerns of abused or neglected children and working to ensure their safety. Of 1,543 allegations, 459 warranted a CPS response.





CENTER FOR ADULT SERVICES



Center for Adult Services programs were awarded \$1.2 million from the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services to expand the permanent supported housing program for adults with serious mental illness by 35 units. This funding will support the creation of a Supportive Housing Team and a new partnership with the Office of Housing. The General Assembly also allocated funding to address salary concerns in the CSB system. Alexandria will receive \$1.4 million annually to help with salary scales in the CSB.

The TRAILS program served 38 young adults who experienced first-time psychosis and successfully discharged 14 persons from the program. Several clients began attending college or working, while one was able to graduate from George Mason University.

Supported Employment and Education expanded to serve 100 clients with mental health, substance use, and intellectual/developmental challenges. Of these clients, 72% secured or retained employment or completed training such as Together We Bake or NOVA community college programs. This includes individuals previously unemployed—in one case for decades due to mental health— a person with barrier crimes, individuals able to go from part-time to full-time and one individual able to discontinue Social Security benefits due to achieving a salary 33% above the City of Alexandria's Living Wage.

The Opioid Treatment Program (OTP) increased its community presence through multiple events focused on recovery, health and wellness. OTP staff provided treatment information, distributed 506 naloxone overdose reversal dispensers and provided training, and made available fentanyl and xylazine test strips.

Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) provides mobile services from an interdisciplinary team to help people diagnosed with a serious mental health condition to function optimally and reach their life goals. ACT partnered with Pathway Homes to provide intensive support to eight clients in maintaining their permanent supported housing, which they have now done for an average of 3.5 years each. An additional 16 ACT clients are in Community Services Board housing, including supervised residential and permanent supported housing.

The Senior Farmers Market Program distributed \$25,000 in nutrition vouchers allotted to senior Alexandrians through pop up farmers markets and achieved the highest voucher redemption rate in the region.

Birmingham Greens Nursing Home, founded in 1927 and co-owned and governed by five regional jurisdictions including the City of Alexandria, was named the number one nursing home in northern Virginia by Newsweek magazine, for their commitment to delivering exceptional long-term care. (related quote)

Adult Intellectual and Developmental Disability Services received seven waiver slots for Alexandrians, which will pay for supports and services for people with the most urgent needs. These clients were able to access group homes, day support, employment, personal care assistance, companions and assistive technology. The services gave them the opportunity to be more integrated into the community. The program served 139 clients, a 20% increase over the past two years.



PEOPLE SERVED



9,968 CONTACTS | EMERGENCY AND CRISIS SERVICES

Of these contacts, in-person evaluations were needed for 1,219 people; 359 required a civil commitment hearing and Temporary Detention Order; 37 required mandatory outpatient hearings and services.

82 SERVED | WEST END WELLNESS CENTER

Offering psychosocial rehabilitation for adults with severe mental illness through skill building classes, recreational and socialization activities; family support and education, and pre-vocational and vocational services to support job placement.



69 SERVED | GROUP HOMES

Providing permanent or transitional living arrangements, supported living, supervision and training to promote personal growth for persons with severe mental illness including those with co-occurring substance use disorders and those with developmental disabilities.

125 SERVED | OLDER ADULT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Providing individual mental health therapy for seniors.



475 SERVED | MENTAL HEALTH THERAPY SERVICES

Providing individual adult and group mental health therapy.

1,149 SERVED | PSYCHIATRY

Providing medical diagnosis, treatment and prevention of behavioral health and substance use disorders including medication management services.



367 SERVED | ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Receiving and investigating reports of suspected adult abuse, neglect and/or financial exploitation. Of 367 reports, 205 cases were unfounded and 16 cases were repeated cases.



OPERATIONS



DCHS Facilities Management transitioned to Breeze, a management system that allows independent living clients to make online rental payments and allows the Facilities Team to input, assign and track service requests made by staff and clients. Facilities continued working closely with Alexandria's Department of General Services to improve the efficiency of systems within DCHS's group homes and provided building improvements such as HVAC system replacements, roof repairs and overall maintenance for 46 residential units and a 63-bed shelter facility.

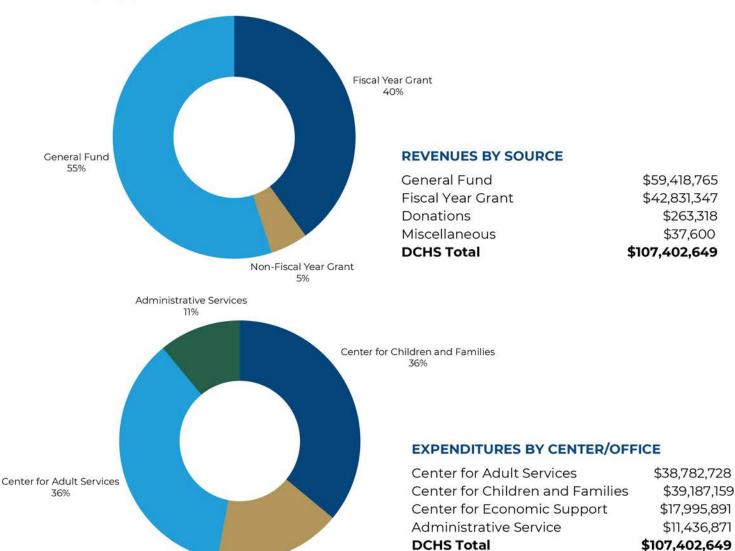
The Tech Support Team, which helps DCHS employees with technical issues on computers and other devices, worked to upgrade systems to Windows 11 and to transfer the remote access connection for teleworking on all laptops to the more secure Z-Scaler. The team also managed the Credible Electronic Health Record system used for behavioral health and hired an administrator; continued the process of migrating Harmony -- a social services case management and payment system-- to Kinship; and administered in-house software including The Personnel System, the training program Learn, the Incident Reporting System and the Medical Treatment Organizer for Residential Program clients and employees.



Human Resources implemented procedures for digital employee training registration and transcripts, replacing paper and manual processes. Hiring bonuses and compensation increases for many mental health positions were implemented, to ensure that DCHS continues to attract and retain diverse talent.

Finance:

Below are the charts showing DCHS Expenditures by Divisions and DCHS Revenues by Source. The Finance Team managed a \$107 million budget-including ARPA funds-- oversaw allocations across programs, tracked expenditures, forecasted financial needs, and ensured strict fiscal responsibility and regulatory compliance. Through effective financial planning, reporting and oversight, they maximized resource efficiency and maintained accountability in managing public funds.



Center for Economic Support



Participant, Support Group for Parents of LGBTQ+ Youth:

"I have learned that I am not alone in this journey. That we parents can and are establishing a safe and loving space where our child will always be able to be completely free and who they are. That it is okay to miss and be sad about what was, while still able to rejoice in what is. Most importantly, our child will always be the beautiful person we brought into this world, and we are blessed to have them in our lives."

Community Partner

"Working with the Youth ID/DD team has been an exceptional experience. They are dedicated and passionate about the work they do and always available to assist, even beyond work hours. They are calm and levelheaded in crisis situations. The Alexandria CSB is lucky to have such extraordinary staff."

Alexandria CSB therapist

I have had the pleasure of working with a young man in the Alexandria Recovery Court Program since January of 2023. Since that time, he has successfully completed residential substance use treatment, graduated from outpatient treatment, obtained a full-time job, and progressed to phase 5 of Recovery Court. He has remained sober from fentanyl for 15+ months and it has been such a joy to watch him rebuild personal relationships and realize his true potential.

The ACT team helped a client and her family move into subsidized housing after decades of paying market rate for their housing. This required years of coordination with ARHA to help them join and then maintain their status on the public housing waitlists. The feedback the family provided was as follows: "From this time onwards I believe we are all going to be okay financially. This is all possible because of you. Thank you so much for everything."

One mother expressed that "The TRAILS program was a lifesaver for my daughter and our family. Trails meets clients where they are and the staff's dedication is second to none. This is mental health treatment done right!"

The West End Wellness Center

"I'm becoming more social and less introverted." "The center has been very instrumental in helping me maintain my sobriety. I look forward to coming here every day and it really helps my mental well- being. I've been coming here and it's such a blessing. It gives me the chance to be surrounded by other members."



FY 2024 DCHS LEADERSHIP TEAM



Department Director Kate Garvey



Deputy Director Federico Gutierrez



Center for Adult Services Director Phil Caldwell



Center for Children & Families Director Barbara Paulson



Center for Economic Support Director Lesa Gilbert



Center for Operations Director Sharon Vaughan-Roach



Chief Fiscal Officer Raphael Obenwa



Human Resources Manager Jeff Bollen



Organizational Development & Equity Chief Kim Hurley



Boards and **Commissions**

The following boards and commissions provide oversight and guidance to DCHS programs:

The Alexandria Community Policy Management Team (ACPMT) sets policy for and administers the Children's Services Act.

The Alexandria Community Services Board (CSB) sets policy for and administers Alexandria's publicly funded mental health, intellectual disability and substance abuse services.

The Children, Youth & Families Collaborative Commission advocates for children and youth, aged prenatal to 21 years, and their families by advising on policies, promoting the City-wide coordination of services and promoting research and best practices.

The Commission on Aging advocates for issues related to aging and promotes the implementation of the Older Americans Act. The Commission advances services that address the needs of older Alexandrians.

The Commission on Employment is responsible for developing the City-wide plan for employment services that reflects the goals of linking existing City employment and training programs with those of the school system and the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce's economic development program.

The Commission for Women provides consultation to City Council on issues concerning women, with focus on human rights, legislation, HIV/AIDS, the economic and health status of women, breast cancer and domestic violence.

The Economic Opportunities Commission advocates for the interests of the City of Alexandria's most vulnerable residents. The EOC serves as the commission to Alexandria's Community Action Agency and advises City Council, the Virginia State Legislature, and the Virginia Congressional Delegation about legislative matters and issues affecting low-income households.

The Social Services Advisory Board monitors the formulation and implementation of social welfare programs and advises City officials on all public welfare matters.

The Workforce Investment Board supports the employment and training needs of the City of Alexandria and Arlington County. They aim to build a workforce development system that prepares the local labor force for the 21st century.



CITY LEADERSHIP



James F. Parajon



Deputy City Manager for Public Safety and Human Services Alethea Predeoux



Mayor Justin M. Wilson



Vice Mayor Amy B. Jackson

CITY COUNCIL



Canek Aguirre



Alyia Gaskins



Sarah Bagley



R. Kirk McPike



John Taylor Chapman





FISCAL YEAR 2024 COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT

