



**COMMUNITY
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PROMOTING
EQUITY THROUGH
EDUCATION,
ENGAGEMENT
AND ADVOCACY



Community Progress Network Building Leadership

Annex 3: Raw Notes Let's Talk About Affordable Housing in Arlington March 28, 2019



Table #1 Mongolian Residents with translator

Facilitator: Pat Findikoglu

Notetaker: Rolda Nedd

5:30 pm Dinner Served Family Style at Tables:

Please share where you live; something about your family (maybe how many children you have?); and if you are working? What you do for a living?

Table #1: All eight residents are Mongolians with families of 2-3 children, most of whom are elementary school age. All are University students or the spouses of University students who have student visas.

Are there any community organizations you are involved in (PTA, classes, other?)

- Mongolian residents who are students at area universities but appear to not have information from these Universities about housing or other community resources.

How did you first hear about Arlington? What attracted you to Arlington that made you want to move here?

- They migrated to the area based on acceptance from Universities and also have friends in the area, who encouraged them to locate here; also heard of good public schools in Arlington and proximity to Washington D.C.
- Most residents have been here 2-4 years and live either at the Wellington or Dominion Towers at the east end of Columbia Pike.
- Most live here because friends or relatives already here helped them find apartments in the neighborhood and the two buildings were willing to provide leases to them with limited documentation.

6:15 pm Guided Table Conversations 1.1: How well is your housing and neighborhood working for you and your family?

How is your current housing and neighborhood arrangement working for you?

- They live at the Wellington and Dominion Towers since these places required less documentation than others where social security or tax IDs were required.
- Residents were generally happy with APS, they are knowledgeable about which schools they want their children to attend
- Easy transportation along the Pike was a major advantage.

6:40 pm Guided Table Conversations 1.2: What are some of the most important features or characteristics of a community that are important to you?

How is your space in and around your house working for you and your family?



- They were most concerned about finding affordable large (3-bedroom) units to accommodate their families
- They expressed concern that the small nearby playground for children was removed and replaced by a dog park.

How does your current housing meet your family needs? What, if any needs are not being met? How safe and secure do you feel in your neighborhood? And around your home?

- In general, residents did not feel safe as there were no cameras; car tires have been stolen, there are no bike racks.
- Residents were afraid to voice their concerns, for fear of retaliation

7:25 pm Guided Table Conversations 2.1: How easy or hard has it been to find Housing that is Affordable to you and your family?

How easy OR hard has it been to find housing that is affordable in Arlington?

- Have generally remained in their housing in spite of problems because it is affordable and they want to remain in the school district
- Lack of a social security number severely restricts choice and cost of housing
- Request for additional documents such as bank statements also affects housing options.

How is your relationship with your landlord, property manager, or other staff?

- There were many complaints about management at the Wellington and Dominion Towers including - stolen or misplaced packages, insufficient washing machines for the number of units per floor, no security cameras, staff being unresponsive to complaints such as smoking in the building
- Often felt that staff is disrespectful to them
- Residents have been told “no more contracts to Mongolians”.

What are some of the challenges that you are experiencing with your housing? Are there other things beyond affordability, that have been limiting? Makes it hard?

- Most residents are spending more than 50% of their income on rent
- The cost of health care, without insurance is a hardship

8:00 pm SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION 2.2: What resources and/or information have you used (or would like to use?)

Is anyone familiar with resources available for getting assistance and/or addressing challenges? (eviction, rent, housing grants)

- There was a translator with the group who represented them at schools and other meetings. They were familiar with and used services at DHS, such as vaccinations and other county health services

- They were not familiar with housing resources through DHS; they were advised to visit the county website and to pick up handouts at the meeting.

How did you come to learn about living where you live now? And did you learn about your current housing opportunity?

- The tenants indicated that their primary reason for attending the CPN meeting was to get information on the new project (The Trove) that is coming online at the Wellington site. They were interested in applying for the units, as they wanted to continue living in the neighborhood.

Were there organizations or people that helped you with your move?

- The translator is their main source of information about County and school resources.

(Pat's comment) The big themes seemed to be:

- 1.) Large number of problems associated with not having social security number.
- 2.) Difficulty in finding housing that is affordable, large enough for their families and in the school district they want.
- 3.) Discrimination against the group as a whole, some of the discrimination is clearly illegal.

FOLLOW UP ITEMS

Table Number/Facilitator: #1 Pat Findikoglu

Name of Participant: All residents

Area of Interest/Concern: Timeline for completion of Wellington Housing expansion project – The Trove; would like to know what documents are needed for a housing application.

NOTES FROM LILY DURAN **TABLE 2: MONGOLIAN**

5:30 pm Dinner Served Family Style at Tables:

Please share where you live; something about your family (maybe how many children you have?); and if you are working? What you do for a living?

- Dorchester Apartments
- Wellington Apartments
- Dominion Towers Apartments
- All participants at table are women; most live with husband and kids. Typically 3 or more kids (Mongolians have large families!)
- Most came to US on F1 student visas that limit their ability to work.
- Most have husband who works full time, mom can't work for visa restrictions, but probably couldn't afford childcare if they did work.
- Most households are 1-income households (dads work), so they can only afford 1 bedroom apartments. One woman says their family of 5 live in a 1 bedroom because they can't afford anything larger on 1 income. Plus kids make noise, the neighbors make noise complaints, she keeps the windows closed to contain the noise.



Are there any community organizations you are involved in (PTA, classes, other?)

- Would like free or very-low-cost English classes. They all want to learn English. One woman has been on a waitlist for English class for 6 months. She needs childcare at the English classes so she can focus, since she can't leave her young kids at home. AMCC offers English classes for \$250/3 mo., but that's too expensive.
- Would like to be involved more but struggle with limited English.
- Most participants at this table like their neighborhood because they're close to Hoffman Boston where their kids attend and where there is a Mongolian bilingual family liaison (Zaya Coughlin). They don't like their apartments, but don't want to leave the neighborhood because they want to stay at Hoffman Boston. Mongolian resources/speakers are needed at other schools in Arlington.

How did you first hear about Arlington? What attracted you to Arlington that made you want to move here?

How long have you lived here? Rent or own? How did you find your first home here?

- Rent
- Most have lived in Arlington for only a couple of years.

6:15 pm Guided Table Conversations 1.1: How well is your housing and neighborhood working for you and your family?

How is your current housing and neighborhood arrangement working for you?

- Not enough playgrounds. All outdoor space is parking garage or lot. Not a safe space for kids to play or get fresh air.
- But at the same time, there's not enough parking for high-rises. Typically, 1 parking space per unit, so families with 2 cars struggle to find parking. When one woman gets home from work at 10 pm, she can never find a parking space.
- The free parking is often not secure, not monitored by cameras or lit with streetlamps. Feel unsafe leaving car overnight.
- Rent is so high that we need to have roommates. They need a parking space too.

What are the things you just love about your neighborhood and community?

- In Fairfax (where one woman lived before), everything is very spread out and far away. She likes that in Arlington everything is close and easy to get to.
- One woman lives in Pentagon City. There she feels safe and secure. She likes the convenience, proximity to city buses, and walkability.

What opportunities or challenges do you have in accessing services, transportation, and others?

- The Wellington has a free shuttle bus as an amenity, which is great.
- City buses are often available on Columbia Pike
- Not enough playgrounds or outside green-space available. Other apartments have playgrounds that they'd like to take their kids to, but they don't want to trespass or break any rules.
- One woman misses the fresh air of Virginia Beach, where she lived before moving to Arlington.

6:40 pm Guided Table Conversations 1.2: What are some of the most important features or characteristics of a community that are important to you?

How is your space in and around your house working for you and your family?

- Very small! 1 person fits in the bathroom at a time. With a second person, you can't close the door.

How does your current housing meet your family needs? What, if any needs are not being met?

- One woman says they have 5 people in 1 bedroom. They'd like to rent a 2 bedroom but can't afford it on 1 income. The price is restrictive. But even a 2 bedroom wouldn't be enough space. The kids are loud and the neighbors call the police on them. They keep the windows closed to keep the noise in.
- Arlington should help with affordable rent for families with children. They need 2 or 3 bedroom apartments. There are so many 1 bedroom apartments, but those are for people who don't have kids.
- One woman is a single mom with 2 kids. She's a student. She pays \$1500/mo. in rent. She's on an F1 visa and has working restrictions. How is she supposed to live?
- Another woman has a daughter in school who's not allowed to work because of school rules (probably also F1 visa restrictions). They pay \$600/mo. in tuition. Mom receives \$500 biweekly from work. They pay \$4000 in rent & college. Kids get Medicaid. There's simply no money left over for food or other basic needs.
- Another woman is on the waitlist for an affordable apartment. Her family is 6 people (2 parents, 4 kids). They've been waiting since early 2018. She doesn't know how long they'll wait. Makes it hard to plan your life.

How safe and secure do you feel in your neighborhood? And around your home?

- Unsafe parking.
- Feel safe in Pentagon City.

7:25 pm Guided Table Conversations 2.1: How easy or hard has it been to find Housing that is Affordable to you and your family?

How easy OR hard has it been to find housing that is affordable in Arlington?

- Very hard!

How is your relationship with your landlord, property manager, or other staff?

- Bad. There is high turnover in leasing office. Leasing office is nice to newcomers, but not to tenants.

What are some of the challenges that you are experiencing with your housing?

- No one speaks Mongolian nor are they willing to try to facilitate communication. They feel they're discriminated against as immigrants and as Mongolians.
- The only lease option is for 12 months. Rent is higher during certain months. If you're locked into a 12 month lease and can't move mid-year, you're stuck in a cycle of moving during the 'high-rent' months. You can't catch a break.
- The rent increase is high & sudden every year. Some neighbors have no rent increase, it feels unfair.
- They are charged extra for maintenance. Struggle to get a simply maintenance request completed, in part because of the language barrier. Leasing office just gives excuses, but doesn't help.
- One woman had so many problems with her affordable housing unit that now she lives in non-affordable housing. There she found parking, amenities, & playground – but so expensive.
- They want stability. They don't want to have to move regularly, every 12 mos.
- They lose their security deposits for small things. One woman asked for carpet to be replaced after several years, the leasing office said “no – carpets should last for longer.” When they moved out, the carpet was stained and they kept the entire deposit, much more than it would have cost to simply replace the carpeting.
- Fraud at Dominion Towers. Leasing office offers \$300 rent discount for residents who refer friends. One woman referred her friends but never received the discount. She followed up with the leasing office several times with no response. Eventually they told her the offer had passed and was no longer valid. So even though she fulfilled her part and they did not, they would not honor the deal.
- One woman reported a very bad experience: Her sons were swimming at the building's pool but didn't have the “pool pass” sticker. They were told to go to the management office, but the manager was on lunch at 3 pm. No one else in the office could help them and they had to wait for a long time. The mom got upset and emotional for being made to wait for so long to prove that they lived there and belonged at the pool. The management office ended up charging her a fine for her “rudeness” (\$150 or \$450, not sure). Either she has to pay the fine or find a new apartment. She didn't want to move, so she paid. She thought it seemed illegal, but had no recourse.

Are there other things beyond affordability, that have been limiting? Makes it hard?

- Language

8:00 pm SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION 2.2: What resources and/or information have you used (or would like to use?)

Is anyone familiar with resources available for getting assistance and/or addressing challenges? (eviction, rent, housing grants)

- Most don't know what they qualify for as non-citizens with legal status. At the table it was clarified that they do not qualify for federal programs (Section 8), but that they do qualify for Arlington County housing grants and other County programs.
- Many are looking for other affordable apartment options on the east end of Columbia Pike near S Courthouse Rd. They like this area so their kids can attend Hoffman Boston.
- They say they're attending this meeting because they want to apply for affordable apartments and want to spend more time with their kids.

- They want to know more about affordable apartment requirements
 - If they don't have a social security number, can they apply with tax ID number?

How did you come to learn about living where you live now? And did you learn about your current housing opportunity?

- Word of mouth in Mongolian community.

Were there organizations or people that helped you with your move?

- Zaya at Hoffman Boston has helped many in the Mongolian community (those w/ kids in the school) with all sorts of resources.

Do you feel like you would be able to move independently at some point?

- Already move independently.

What types of supports have been/would be helpful for you to maintain your housing?

- More information about County housing assistance.
- More understanding of the waitlist process.
- Mongolian language assistance when communicating with landlords, etc.
- English classes
- Childcare (for English classes and more)
- Rental assistance for families with kids

Table Number: 4

Group: Teens

Notetaker: Hannah Dannenfelser

Schools Represented:

Jefferson (2) – grades 6 & 8

Wakefield (6) – grades 9 & 10

Washington-Lee (1) - grade 10

Topics that gauged the most interest and discussion:

- Safety: Students see a lot of smoking of marijuana and tobacco in their neighborhoods; They haven't seen much crime but the crime they've seen makes them feel unsafe
- Living in Arlington: Resounding comments were that students want their parents to be able to afford to stay and want to be able to stay here when we're older
- Living in Arlington: Want to stay here because of County services, schools, friends, and because Arlington is "cool"

What things are like in their neighborhoods; Opportunities and challenges that exist:

- Most students commented on diversity of their neighborhoods – “people look like me”
- Generally close to amenities, community centers etc; comments on most amenities (not all) being walkable
- Students had varying answers regarding their interactions with neighbors. Some have regular interactions with neighbors, some don’t interact with others in their neighborhood at all. One student commented that the neighborhood interactions tend to be segregated by housing style (i.e. apartments, townhouses, single family homes).
- Students commented on neighborhood make up changing with people purchasing extremely expensive single family homes.
- Many students commented on regularly seeing marijuana and cigarettes in their neighborhoods and being uncomfortable with that. They were especially uncomfortable with young children seeing the bad influence.
- One student commented that since she lives deeper in the neighborhood, the bus stop is a long walk to the next main road (seven blocks). It can be frustrating on a cold day.
- One student doesn’t have a school bus to take her to school but the reason for that was unclear.

How is space in and around your home?

- Majority of students said they had adequate room in their homes, however they could have more space if it wasn’t so expensive.
- Two students described more crowded living conditions, including a family of 7 living in a two bedroom apartment

How safe and secure do you feel in neighborhood?

- Generally students feel safe in their neighborhoods, however they commented on a few individual situations of crime they’ve seen that have made them feel uncomfortable and nervous
- Students had a generally positive response to police being in their neighborhoods. They said they felt like police were there to help them and they understood why they were there.
- One student commented that the police are particularly suspicious of their neighborhood
- The facilitator described what neighborhood watch is and the students were unfamiliar. They had a mixed response but didn’t seem to find it especially compelling.

Relocation and Housing Affordability

- Students collectively commented on concerns about their parents being able to continue living here. They all expressed a desire to stay in Arlington, stay in their schools, and stay close to their friends. A few mentioned that their parents are considering moving farther out due to affordability and they were concerned about that. One mentioned a potential move to Maryland which feels like a whole new place where they won’t feel comfortable.
- When asked about how their friends feel about being in Arlington, they said that most of their friends want to stay here.
- Many said that they would enjoy the opportunity to explore another place to live (e.g. college) but most also said they would like the option to continue to live in Arlington in

the future. They expressed concerns about affordability to stay here. They mentioned that with big businesses coming to Arlington, they are concerned about it continuing to get more expensive to live here.

- Students commented that as they graduate, they may need to live with parents in order to be able to afford living here. They mentioned that the “bar is high” for making more money in order to be able to afford the cost of living.
- One student focused on her desire to stay in Arlington due to the quality of services and benefits that the Department of Human Services provides.

Table 5

Participants:

- Resident One
- Resident Two
- Resident Three
- Resident Four
- Resident Five
- Resident Six
- Resident Seven
- Resident Eight
- Resident Nine

Guided Table Conversations 1.1

How well is your current housing and neighborhood working for you and your family?

- It’s affordable, but parking is an issue. \$25 per month per car.
- I have one car and have to pay \$100 per month for parking
- Then I have to pay \$75 per month for a second car
- Parking is my biggest issue. I have a two bedroom and only one parking spot.
- What’s good is that there is good public transportation.
- There’s also very limited street parking
- The rent is increasing year by year. I’ve seen a \$45 increase for our 2 bedroom unit.
- Other people see an increase, but for the most part the people at our table are newer to their neighborhoods/ apartment complexes.
- Utilities are not included in my affordable housing.
- Her oldest brother has kids and wife and she lives with them. Brother is buying a house and she’s trying to see if there is a chance for her mom to get affordable housing. Mom is in Ethiopia right now, but she is looking for housing for her mom and her. She is a student and her mom is not working. Her father might come too. She also has her other brother here. The four of them will live together, mother, father, brother and her.
- We have a problem allowing guests to come in. We don’t have a remote way to allow people into the complex. If there is an emergency, how will we let people in? at this point, we have a scanner that allows people in to the building and elevator. Columbia Hills- S. Fredrick st.
- Other people have the same issue. It’s great for security reasons, but there should be some sort of code to allow people to get in incase of an emergency.
- We have free internet in Arlington Mill through the pilot program. They even gave us a laptop for our household

Guided Table Conversations 1.2

How is your space in and around your house working for you and your family?



- The units are very small. There's no room for much more than a bed. We live in a three bedroom with three kids in Arlington Mill.
- I like having a playground, shopping center near us
- Because there is a community center around us, there are a lot of activities that our kids can take part in. for example, our kids like to play soccer
- The shopping center is nice, because there is a CVS
- As far as space and bedroom size numbers go, in our area, I would like to get a unit with more bedrooms. I'd like for it to be sufficient enough for older kids, but the price is going to be much higher.
- It's convenient for travel and other amenities, but it's very hard to find something affordable, even if it's affordable housing.
- The building I live in has great activities for the kids. There is storytime class, but the times are at 4:30 or 3 and that's not good for the kids, because they are just getting home from school. After 5, it would be much better.
- Affordable housing units are 3 bedrooms max. There should be more that can accommodate 4 bedrooms.
- You have to go out of the county to find units with more bedrooms. You go around and around finding little to nothing, because they are so limited. The three bedrooms are very rare to find.
- If someone's family were to increase, finding suitable affordable housing would be a problem. Others at the table agreed.
- I was living in a two bedroom with two kids. When I had my third, I had the same issue. It's been very hard to transfer into larger units.
- I have to go onto a waitlist for a larger unit, because the options aren't available. It can be very long, and while we wait, we have to live in the same apartment that's much too small.
- My brother's wife used to have a parking pass, but it got lost. So now we can only park one car. She ends up parking somewhere else in the neighborhood, because she doesn't want to pay for a replacement.
- I had a similar issue, but when I needed to get another permit, it cost \$100.
- I also lost my key and getting a replacement cost \$25. Not only for the house, but for the garage too.
- We use the same key for getting into the complex, the garage, and the elevators.

How safe and secure do you feel in your neighborhood? And around your home?

- What is scary is crossing the street. There are a lot of cars and that causes concern
- There is a crosswalk, but no lights. Sometimes the cars are going very fast. If there was a light right there, I feel like more people would pay attention. There are no slow down signs or lights in this high traffic/ high speed area.
- The closest light is much further away from the cross walk.
- So far, my neighborhood is safe
- I haven't seen anything that is concerning.
- My mom takes me to school on her way to work, so it's safe and accessible.
- There are a lot of police officers around my neighborhood. I think it's better when they are there.
- I feel safe in my complex because it has security measures, but in the case of an emergency in my unit, people would not be able to come up and help because they don't have appropriate codes to get through the front door or elevators.

Guided Table Conversations 2.1

How easy or hard has it been to find housing that is affordable in Arlington?

- It was easy for me. When I first came here, I was pregnant and living in a small house with my husband in a studio apartment and after that, we needed a 1 bedroom. We moved into a new complex and I was really happy. We've been living in Arlington Mill for a year now.
- It was easy to find affordable housing. I went to the Arlington County affordable housing website. But at the same time, I still couldn't afford the prices, so I applied for a housing grant. There were a lot of things that they didn't like about my situation. For example, they forced me to pay for child support. The process is very long. The child support paper work was slowing it down and I missed my housing grant application deadline (March 22). I called the office to ask if it was going to be a problem. They said it would be fine. I haven't gotten any letters to notify me of whether I've gotten the grant or not.
- A lot of people at the table agreed that their experience has been fine.

How is your relationship with your landlord, property manager, or other staff?

- They are all really nice. I really really appreciate the staff in my complex. They are very responsive and are always there whenever we need them. Things are taken care of on time. — 4000 Wilson blvd. (The View of Liberty Center).
- We still have a lot of issues with parking. If a guest wants to come, we have issues paying the \$10 fee per day and \$100.
- I also don't have any problems with them, every Sunday the kids get tutoring in our building. There are computer and reading classes for the kids and adults. Sometimes there are cooking classes. There is a great commitment from the staff at our complex. (The Springs Arlington Mill)

Are there other things beyond affordability that have been limiting? Makes it hard?

- It would be great if there was in-unit laundry
- Each floor in my complex has it's own laundry room. It's good, but sometimes it's an issue when I put money in, and the machine doesn't work. It would be much better if there was card system.
- It's good to know that there are units that have laundry in-unit.
- I've had a great experience with my unit because it's a new building. I'm the first to live in it.
- The utilities should be included.
- I have to do laundry in another building. It would be best if it were in the same building.
- I wish there was a playground
- I wish there was a swimming pool
- Wanting to buy a house eventually feels limiting. I wish I knew of paths towards home ownership.
- It would also be great if there was childcare around my neighborhood. It's not affordable or available.
- It would be nice if affordable housing units had hardwood. The bedrooms are carpet, but the rest of the unit is hardwood. It would make it easier for us to clean. Also, the smell of the food stays in the carpet.
- Now that Amazon is coming, it seems really hard to possibly buy here.
- We think about buying, but that would require me to move out of Arlington.
- I would very much so choose to stay in Arlington, even if things stay the same with my affordable housing situation.
- (teenage student) I like the community and would like to stay here, because this is where my friends are. I wouldn't want to have to make new friends if I leave here.



Table 6:

We had 7 participants at our table. 3 seniors, 3 working, 1 non-disclosed (employment)

- 1. Please share where you live; something about your family (maybe how many children you have?); and if you are working? What you do for a living?**
 - Residents lived at apartment communities in Arlington. Mostly owned by management companies. One woman shared she rented a room from a private landlord.
- 2. Are there any community organizations you are involved in (PTA, classes, other?)**
 - APAH, AHC, Housing Grant, Bonder & Amanda Johnson CDC
- 3. How did you first hear about Arlington? What attracted you to Arlington that made you want to move here?**
 - Most shared they grew up in Arlington for most of their life. Another participant shared she wanted to be in Arlington because of the resources and school system.
- 4. How long have you lived here? Rent or own? How did you find your first home here?**
 - Most shared most of their lives
- 5. How is your current housing and neighborhood arrangement working for you?**
 - 1 lived in APAH, 1 lived in AHC, 1 lived in Arlington Mill, 2 lived in an affordable housing community, 1 lived in community by DHS with assistance from housing grant, 1 rented a room.
 - Enjoyed their current housing.
 - A resident shared their rooms were nicely sized based on the monthly amount they paid.
- 6. What are the things you just love about your neighborhood and community?**
 - Location: close to grocery stores, farmer's market, theater
 - Ability to walk to most of the location mentioned above
 - Easy access to public transportation
- 7. What opportunities or challenges do you have in accessing services, transportation, and others?**
 - Affordable units may be affordable when you move in, but the yearly rent increases cause you to no longer afford that unit.
 - Having to mail a check to the landlord or drop off at a specific location. A resident shared that some months she does not get paid until the 5th, which means she has to catch 2 buses to drop her rent payment off. She shared it was written in her lease to mail or personally drop the check at a set address off the property.
 - Many were afraid of late-fees or attorney fees
 - A resident shared when you call some apartment communities and request low-income or affordable housing the management team is rude, or doesn't provide the same information.



- Many shared they learned about opportunities such as Housing Grant, SNAP, or other programs through their social worker/case workers.
- A resident shared that she works 2 jobs, has no children, but is overqualified/doesn't qualify for most programs (Section 8, housing grant, SNAP, etc) but is struggling to pay her rent and other expenses each month.

8. How is your space in and around your house working for you and your family?

- A resident shared her space was large enough
- A resident shared her space was too small
- A resident shared she liked her housing but didn't know her neighbors.
- Most agreed that being close to public trans and shopping centers (grocery stores) was a huge perk.
- A resident shared she had a lot of stray animals around her house. (rented a room from private landlord)
- Resident shared she is looking at moving to find more affordable housing
- Resident shared she had to give up cable—started limited other services as well.

9. How does your current housing meet your family needs? What, if any needs are not being met?

- A resident shared that she has 3 children and 1 is in college. She makes it work because she likes the location and convenience of where she lives. She shared that others may have moved further in VA or MD, but she didn't want to make that sacrifice.
- All shared feel safe walking around at all hours—a senior shared she wanted more lighting around her community especially at night (AHC Community)
- Resident shared she had an access code that made her feel safe.
- Some affordable housing units are nasty in Arlington—pest infested, older buildings, etc
- Resident shared you should haven't worry about paying rent, utilities,
- Shared had to move from other housing developer because of a sexual predator
- Doesn't have to pay for parking—APAH provides free parking and has a designated spot. Shared she felt it was intrusive at first because those that are on voucher programs all park together on the lower floors. Felt separated at first.
- Can walk to the store to purchase needed items
- States after rent is paid there is nothing left
- Didn't share they felt they had to choose between rent and health care.

10. How safe and secure do you feel in your neighborhood? And around your home?

- Resident shared cars drive very fast in the residential area.
- Increase lighting
- Stray animals

11. How easy OR hard has it been to find housing that is affordable in Arlington?

- Most found their apartments on internet (2) others shared through mutual friends or caseworker/social workers helped them move into housing



- Shared more things should be printed as no one at the table except 1 person shared they had internet access in the home.
- Having to ensure not to work over or under to meet the income guidelines for the program—ensuring to report any changes in the income. Feels can't work overtime in fear of losing the Housing Grant or other programs.

12. How is your relationship with your landlord, property manager, or other staff?

- Most shared they have a strong relationship with their landlord and other staff
- Shared they knew the service techs, managers and other staff by name
- Shared sometime the managers are nosy—want to know who are in the units, etc.
- Shared an incident of the service tech not knocking on the door—coming in without announcing self
- Shared having to report things multiple time because it was not fixed correctly the first time

13. What are some of the challenges that you are experiencing with your housing?

- Rent increasing every year
- Units small for the amount paid

14. Are there other things beyond affordability, that have been limiting? Makes it hard?

- Rent cost are high
- Must move every few years because the rent becomes unaffordable.
- Having washer/dryer in the units
- More cameras in the laundry rooms, parking decks/garage, etc
- Lack of parking places
- Leasing office not taking complaints seriously—having a caseworker have to call and make a report

15. Is anyone familiar with resources available for getting assistance and/or addressing challenges? (eviction, rent, housing grants)

- Housing grant
- Affordable housing
- Snappet program
- Resident shared she lived in a shelter for 2 months before obtaining housing and employment at Arlington County Employment Center. She shared she recently purchased curtains for the home---she became teary eyed sharing this with us. She has been living in the unit for over a year. She shared that she didn't have furniture for a long time.

16. How did you come to learn about living where you live now? And did you learn about your current housing opportunity?

- Case worker/social worker



- County
- Bonder & Amanda Johnson CDC
- Internet search
- Family friend

17. Were there organizations or people that helped you with your move?

- Arlington County
- Bonder & Amanda Johnson CDC
- Shelter

18. Do you feel like you would be able to move independently at some point?

- Enjoys housing agencies that provide additional resources and support to the tenants to help them advance in life.

19. What types of supports have been/would be helpful for you to maintain your housing?

- Knowing the resources
- Housing Grant
- Having access to these resources—but over income

Table 7: English

Table Host: Libby Garvey

Facilitator: Abbey Raphael

Notetaker: Yoomie Ahn

5:30 pm Dinner Served Family Style at Tables:

Please share where you live; something about your family (maybe how many children you have?); and if you are working? What you do for a living?

Household make-up	Participant Comment Tag	Occupation	Residence
Single male (senior)	SM1	Former APS bus driver; formerly homeless	Committed Affordable Unit (CAF) with Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) subsidy*
Single female (adult)	SF1	Did not provide	ASPAN client

Single female (senior)	SF2	Formerly homeless	1-BR CAF with Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) subsidy*
Single female (student) + parents and 2 siblings	SF3	Wakefield HS junior	2-BR Market-rate apartment (Wildwood Apartments)
Single female (student) + parents and 2 siblings	SF4	W-L HS junior	2-BR Market-rate apartment (Wildwood Apartments)
Single female (senior)	SF5	Did not provide	Did not provide
Single female (adult) + 1 adult daughter (Marymount University student)	SF6	On disability (SSI recipient)	1-BR Market-rate Affordable (MARK) apartment
Single female (adult) + 3 children	SF7	Did not provide	2-BR with Housing Grant subsidy
*Is residing or has resided in an Arlington shelter in the past.			

How did you first hear about Arlington? What attracted you to Arlington that made you want to move here?

Participant	Comment
SF6	She moved from Oklahoma to live with her adult daughter who is a student at Marymount University

How long have you lived here? Rent or own? How did you find your first home here?

Participant	Comment
SM1	Lived in Arlington County all his life; they tore down the projects; 3-BR house with his mother who passed away; Dunbar Homes; then he went to a shelter for awhile

6:15 pm Guided Table Conversations 1.1: How well is your housing and neighborhood working for you and your family?

How is your current housing and neighborhood arrangement working for you?

Participant	Comment
SM1	Rent went up but Social Security stayed the same; he lives at Arlington Mill which is 4-5 years old; newer construction
SF2	She loves the convenience of Clarendon; she would be in a shelter without housing assistance; her son went to Virginia Tech and was homeless on breaks; he had friends and stayed over at their homes; he has a great job now and sent her money when she was in the shelter; “they” do a great job at vPoint; she may be amongst the lowest income residents; County has designated staff person who comes out and helps with form filling; County inspects the apartments; she is very happy with her housing arrangement
SF3, SF4	Parents complain about rent being too high for amount of rooms; more than \$2,500; rent keeps getting raised
SF6	“They” don’t help in Arlington; she had to go to see a social worker today for problems with health, \$277 SSI cut; her gross SSI payment is \$771; \$1425 rent for a 1-BR; her daughter cannot pay additional portion to her rent; budget cuts political; norm for housing in Arlington on Columbia Pike is \$1500/month
SF7	Two bedroom with three children; \$1580; budget \$1475; lease finishes in June; she cannot find 2BR for her budget; \$1750 plus utilities; not affordable; two children in college; her youngest is 16; only one person earning an income; she is very proud of having a place of her own after almost becoming homeless; denied housing grant three times because she moved from Fairfax; she applied in September and received assistance in March; she had bad credit because she was working and feeding her three kids; she works two jobs; the housing grant allowed her children to focus and go to school; if she hadn’t gotten it, her son wouldn’t have gone to college; he knows how his mother was struggling and he would have worked to help her; her third one will also go to college; the kids sleep and wake up at home without having to worry about whether they will have a place to sleep; daughter joined IB program and got scholarship; everything is organized; stress-less and focused on school; but still she is

	looking for an apartment; elementary middle school and high school; kids all get iPads and laptops through the schools
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What opportunities or challenges do you have in accessing services, transportation, and others?

Participant	Comment
SF1	Doing laundry is not easy; she has to go down a hill to get to a laundromat
SF2	Bus access is important; the local handicapped bus system works great; she gets tickets every month from the County; cars make it dangerous to walk in Clarendon; they need to slow down; people in Arlington feel very entitled; they look at their phone while driving; very aggressive drivers; she walks to AFAC and the Salvation Army; under a mile and a half, walking is better; DHS case worker assists with obtaining Metro Access cards
SF3, SF4	There is so much construction going on in the neighborhood around their apartment building.
SF6	Everything is very convenient and safe; people walk at night even as late as 10/11 pm; there is a Giant, CVS, ABC, gas station, everything
SF7	Everybody in her family feels safe and able to walk at night; she loves her place, but does not know if she will be able to stay
Table (General Consensus)	No issue with parking availability; the issue is the cost of a parking space

6:40 pm Guided Table Conversations 1.2: What are some of the most important features or characteristics of a community that are important to you?

How is your space in and around your house working for you and your family?



Participant	Comment
SF1	She lives in an efficiency (bed is in the living room); she used to live in a 1-BR; she moved to a downstairs apartment that is bigger; the only problem is maintenance
SF2	She lives in a one bedroom unit; out of 10 floors, there are only 10 3-BR apartments in the building; 100 units; lots of students; washer and dryer in unit
SF3, SF4	Family in two bedrooms; five people; three girls in one bedroom; share everything; they do homework in the dining room; get distracted easily
SF6	Her daughter has the bedroom; she sleeps on a pull-out couch in the living room
SF7	She shares a bedroom with her daughter; her two sons share the other bedroom; she thinks this is enough space, but the rent is too high

How safe and secure do you feel in your neighborhood? And around your home?

Participant	Comment
Table (General Consensus)	No security concerns; people feel safe
SF6	Dorchester Towers waiting for the County to buy out their properties; property management stating that the County may buy the buildings? Cherokee Nation Business (CNB) looking for someone to represent them on real estate projects in the DC area

7:25 pm Guided Table Conversations 2.1: How easy or hard has it been to find Housing that is Affordable to you and your family?

How easy OR hard has it been to find housing that is affordable in Arlington?

Participant	Comment
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SF2	<p>DHS helps PSH residents to find apartments; she did not have a choice in where the apartment; people in shelter has first choice; three year waiting list otherwise;</p> <p>DC residents come to Arlington and sign in to Arlington shelters for meals for 90 days in order to become an Arlington resident eligible for housing grants; residency based upon signed lease</p>
SM1	<p>When he was homeless, had a heart attack, and getting care at VHC, Patty Nance (DHS case manager) helped him (John Robinson put him in touch with her).</p>
SF6	<p>She selected based upon utilities (all-inclusive); once she signed the lease, she went to DHS and learned that the property did not accept Housing Grants; so she does not receive housing assistance and has to pay most of her SSI to rent; applications cost \$50+ to pay for credit and background checks; she now has a DHS case manager</p>

How is your relationship with your landlord, property manager, or other staff?

Participant	Comment
SF1	<p>Generally speaking, good on changing of air filters; needing something fixed; lazy maintenance man who has been there a long time; she moved in in January and shower leak still has yet to be fixed; she needs to contact ASPAN case worker about bathroom condition (possible mold, etc.)</p>
SM1	<p>Arlington Mill bedbugs exterminated; flooding issue fixed; new carpeting</p>
SF2	<p>She was in a shelter for a year; homeless for three years due to epilepsy; she signed everything put in front of her in order to get her apartment which costs her \$200/month; she lost her house with a yard; she is on Medicare; she is in “super good hands” now; building property management is so used to PSH residents; not all have computers; maintenance is taken care of by the main office; carpet and other apartment inspections every six months; church comes and does separate inspections; some residents don’t like it</p>
SF6	<p>Older apartment building that is nice and well maintained; call answered within 15 minutes by staff</p>

SF7	Broken refrigerator fixed; new carpet installed
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What are some of the challenges that you are experiencing with your housing?

Participant	Comment
SF2	DHS contacts are aware of all the resources; they provide housecleaning assistance; medical transportation; free public transportation
SF6	No one at DHS gave her this information; she did not even know to ask about resources because in Oklahoma there are no resources so she did not bother to ask Why doesn't the County have a packet for new incoming residents seeking help from DHS? In order to get the level of services that some receive, one has to go through the shelter system?
SF7	\$20-50/month rent increases; higher utility costs

8:00 pm SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION 2.2: What resources and/or information have you used (or would like to use?)

Is anyone familiar with resources available for getting assistance and/or addressing challenges? (eviction, rent, housing grants)

Participant	Comment
SF2	DHS case worker (Patty) helps her in so many ways, including helping her to obtain \$3,000 for private dental work (three crowns; one at a time)
SF6	Why can't two Section 8 voucher or Housing Grant recipients share a 2-BR unit; they can support each other and lower their housing cost by being roommates?

How did you come to learn about living where you live now? And did you learn about your current housing opportunity?

Participant	Comment
SF2	DHS case worker
SF6	Online research and phone calls; specific search for property that included utilities
SM1	DHS case worker

SUMMARY

Key Themes	Needed Supports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rent increases are a constant concern • Arlington is a safe, walkable community • DHS case workers (Patty Nance in particular) are essential and much appreciated by clients • DHS and clients have resource information to share (case worker-client; client-client) • DHS case workers can have significant impact on client lives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A welcome packet for new clients about resources is needed

FOLLOW UP ITEMS

Table Number/Facilitator: Table 7/Abbey Raphael
 Name of Participant: SF1 (Christine; last name not provided)
 Area of Interest/Concern: Shower leak, bathroom condition

Table 8 5:30 pm Dinner Served Family Style at Tables:

Please share where you live; something about your family (maybe how many children you have?); and if you are working? What you do for a living?

- K lives on South Scott Street off Columbia pike with her husband and two children.



- PO is a single mom; she lives in South Arlington at Park Shirlington with her children. PO has a Section 8 voucher and a DHS case manager and housing locator helped PO find her housing. PO grew up in Arlington.
- T lives at Colonial Village in Courthouse with her children. T is a single mom and originally came to Colonial Village after spending some time at a Doorways for Women shelter. She is moving out of her apartment on March 31, 2019. She did not indicate where she is moving.
- D and S are married and live at The Springs apartments in the Ballston neighborhood with their two children. Both of their children attend Barrett elementary. The couple has lived in several committed affordable properties across Arlington and has taken advantage of several DHS programs. During a challenging period for their relationship, S visited a Doorways for Women shelter with her children to get back on her feet. S and D reunited and moved to The Springs when it opened in 2017. D was recently laid off from his job and S works as a receptionist at another Arlington apartment community.
- L lives at Harbor Heights, which used to be called Magnolia Commons. L is retired and lives on a fixed income. She has lived in Arlington for several years.
- PA lives at Claridge House between Pentagon City and Crystal City. PA is originally from New York City and moved to Arlington four years ago when she was working as a caregiver for a woman who also lived at Claridge House. PA was a caregiver for 2.5 years after which her client passed away. At that time, the property manager of Claridge House encouraged PA to submit an application for an apartment. She was commuting between NY and DC, living with her brother and cousin in both areas until she found out she had been approved for the apartment at Claridge House.
- Y: Y has lived at Arlington Mill Residences since the building opened in 2015 with her now 16-year-old daughter. Prior to moving to Arlington Mill, Y lived at Columbia Grove, which is another CAF property in Arlington. Y is involved in civic associations and resident programs at Arlington Mill.

6:15 pm Guided Table Conversations 1.1: How well is your housing and neighborhood working for you and your family?

K: K lives on South Scott Street off Columbia pike. She likes her current neighborhood; the location is not too far from DC, easily accessible to metro and other areas in the region.

PO: PO lives in South Arlington in the Shirlington neighborhood. PO notes that the neighborhood works well for her, she appreciates the quiet nature but she mostly just goes to work and stays at home.

T: T lives at Colonial Village in the Courthouse neighborhood. T says she does not like living near the County courthouse and jail and finds that there is too much police and fire activity, which is loud and disruptive. She also feels that she has too many noisy neighbors. T does like the transportation availability in the neighborhood.

D and S: They live at The Springs Apartments in the Ballston neighborhood. Generally speaking, the couple likes the neighborhood, especially their apartment's proximity to retail, grocery store, and transportation. They also like that the school that their children attend is so close which makes it easy for drop off and pick up and for their kid's stability. There was one instance where a neighbor pulled the fire alarm and it kept their kids awake and one time a neighbor complained about the noise the children were making on the playground, which she found to be unwelcoming. Since then, D and S tend to keep their children in their apartment to play. They sometimes do not feel very welcomed by neighbors.

L: L lives at Harbor Heights, which used to be called Magnolia Commons in the Arlington Mill neighborhood. Generally, L likes her neighborhood, particularly the walkability and variety of transit options and says that the neighborhood feels safe. L has not spoken to many of the neighbors but generally finds them polite when she sees them in the hallway or common spaces. L does not like the street parking permit requirements in the neighborhood and around her building. Her apartment complex doesn't have enough visitor spaces so it makes it challenging for her to have guests over, since it is so hard to find street parking.

PA: Lives at Claridge House between Pentagon City and Crystal City. PA loves the neighborhood and Arlington, as a whole. Being from New York City originally, PA enjoys the quiet neighborhoods yet urban feel of the area. PA loves that her neighborhood has everything – shopping, transportation, retail, restaurants. PA feels that her building and neighbors are nice.

Y: Y has lived in Arlington Mill since the building opened in 2015. Y really likes that her apartment is close to a very busy area and that it is close to her work, retail and feels that the transportation availability is key for her family. She does notice that the area is changing rapidly and feels that it is slowly gentrifying. Y also sees a high volume of homeless people in the County and her neighborhood. Y is glad for affordable housing and the supports that are provided to residents.

Table 9

–Anne VB

Participants:

DM-Arlington resident since 2010, was in Marabella, now in Park Rosslyn, senior, visually impaired

D: Arlington resident since 1981, in Buchanan Gardens, has housing grant, senior

W: Arlington resident for 46 yrs., lives in VA Gardens

V: been here 4 months, lives in Wellington, has kids in Hoffman Boston

Y: moved here from Alexandria 4 yrs. ago, lives in VA Gardens, 3 kids

JD- Arlington resident for 30 yrs., lives in Harvey Hall, senior

TH: Arlington resident since 1977, on APAH board, lives in Park Rosslyn

J: Arlington resident for 5 yrs., lives in Woodbury Park

A couple of them seemed to be in permanent supportive housing

Facilitator: Cicely Whitfield

6:15 pm Guided Table Conversations 1.1: How well is your housing and neighborhood working for you and your family?

Things I like about my neighborhood/community

- Likes living in Rosslyn, very accessible
- So glad I live in Arlington, people look out for each other
- Likes the sliding scale fees for multiple children at Barcroft Community Ctr.
- Very close to metro, stores, ok if you don't have a car
- The mental health services at Sequoia are "impeccable"
- VHC

- Free Clinic
- Libraries
- Gyms
- Dental Clinic and other services made me return here

Challenges:

- Parking is a big problem, will get worse after Amazon
- There are a lot of services but it's hard to know about them especially if you don't have a computer.
- All you have to do is go to first floor of Sequoia [DHS] and divulge just a little about yourself and they will help you
- Drastic changes to section 8 are coming
- There is a constant tugging on affordability; Amazon will make it harder

6:40 pm Guided Table Conversations 1.2: What are some of the most important features or characteristics of a community that are important to you?

- Older apartments are more spacious than newer ones
- Need more on-site storage
- Not enough parking
- Having washers and dryers and fitness rooms are not just “luxuries”; affordable apartments should have them on-site

Safety concerns:

- The fobs don't work
- Security codes are given to too many people
- People leave doors propped open
- Lots of cameras in Harvey Hall-appreciate that
- Too many scooters lying around

7:25 pm Guided Table Conversations 2.1: How easy or hard has it been to find Housing that is Affordable to you and your family?

How easy OR hard has it been to find housing that is affordable in Arlington?

- Very hard
- Long waiting lists, no consistent listing system community wide
- The demand is so high you have to take it sight unseen

How is your relationship with your landlord, property manager, or other staff?

- varies

What are some of the challenges that you are experiencing with your housing?

- Rent keeps increasing but there aren't ever any improvements
- Towing

- Have to park very far away
- Parking is expensive
- Things get stolen from washers and dryers

Are there other things beyond affordability, that have been limiting? Makes it hard?

- Child care
- Health problems

8:00 pm SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION 2.2: What resources and/or information have you used (or would like to use?)

- HCV works well, folks at Sequoia are great
- Had to wait 5 years for a voucher then I had only 2 weeks to find a place or lose it—very stressful!
- Rent increases are higher than my Social Security COLA

Table 10

6:15 pm Guided Table Conversations 1.1: How well is your housing and neighborhood working for you and your family?

How is your current housing and neighborhood arrangement working for you?

- Well: Walkable, many food choices, Target, Safeway, washer/dryer in-unit.
- Good and bad: Can get to school in under two minutes, but it's tough without transportation, and it's expensive. Has a 9 year old daughter that can't go outside to play. Playground is a block away and there are loiterers outside. The basketball court is uphill.
- Likes Arlington because of green space, nice basketball court and track at Barcroft, and easy access to transportation. A lot of traffic and afraid to walk because of the traffic.
- Comfortable: Quiet and close to CVS but doesn't like being out at night, because of rats.
- Small apartment (2 BR for 5 people) and far from school.
- Nice, big apartment (3 BR for 7 people) and close to school.
- Living in transitional housing right now, but good neighborhood without prior contacts. Can live anywhere and be alright. Transitional housing is a sanctuary.

What are the things you just love about your neighborhood and community?

- Everyone at the table felt physically safe.
- Close amenities.

What opportunities or challenges do you have in accessing services, transportation, and others?

- Knowing what services are available.
- Are there programs to help with home ownership?

6:40 pm Guided Table Conversations 1.2: What are some of the most important features or characteristics of a community that are important to you?

How is your space in and around your house working for you and your family?

- Big unit but hard to find parking.
- Small unit. Hard to have grandkids over.
- Small unit with bad views, bad tv and cell phone service. Very clustered and can't fit couch in living room.
- 2 BR for 5 people: Small and need more space.
- 3 BR for 7 people: Big and nice.

How does your current housing meet your family needs? What, if any needs are not being met?

- Bad reception
- Small living spaces
- Need more parking
- Small kitchen, which is hard for teaching children to cook.
- One suggestion was to house people with similar age groups, like families with kids to be housed together and older people housed together to eliminate noise complaints.
- Another suggestion was to “educate the old people” on things like current music to have the different generations relate better.
- House has old furniture and wondered if there were resources to replace it.
 - Suggestions made included layaway (one individual noted that she purchased a living room set from Value City using layaway) and SHARE.

How safe and secure do you feel in your neighborhood? And around your home?

- Feel safe most of the time but in summertime, kids loiter.
- Dark streets.
- Most feel safe overall.
- Afraid of police at night.

7:25 pm Guided Table Conversations 2.1: How easy or hard has it been to find Housing that is Affordable to you and your family?

How easy OR hard has it been to find housing that is affordable in Arlington?

- Too many rules to get in.
- Units too small.
- Particularly challenging with criminal history.
- Easier with PSH, which requires regular behavioral health treatment.

How is your relationship with your landlord, property manager, or other staff?

- Not much discussion surrounding this topic.
- One gentleman was evicted for 21-30's. He felt like he could have been helped if there had been a County liaison to communicate with the landlord.
- Need more caseworkers to deal directly with property management.

are some of the challenges that you are experiencing with your housing?

- Housing Grant: When you get an increase in salary, benefits and housing grant decrease. Incompetent caseworkers.
- A lot of paperwork for housing grant and other services.
- For hourly employees, where salary fluctuates, the housing grant goes up and down.

Are there other things beyond affordability, that have been limiting? Makes it hard?

- As income increases, housing grant decreases.
- Racial equity. Race is a limiting factor and people of color are treated differently.
- Criminal histories.
- Need programs that move people forward and give second chances.
- Some assistance doesn't apply to certain zip codes (22203 for example).

8:00 pm SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION 2.2: What resources and/or information have you used (or would like to use?)

Is anyone familiar with resources available for getting assistance and/or addressing challenges? (eviction, rent, housing grants)

- Housing grants
- DHS
- PSH

How did you come to learn about living where you live now? And did you learn about your current housing opportunity?

Were there organizations or people that helped you with your move?

- PSH, DHS

Do you feel like you would be able to move independently at some point?

- Most live independently.

What types of supports have been/would be helpful for you to maintain your housing?

- More caseworker support.

Table 11: English

Table Host: Martha Bozman

Facilitator: Susan Bell

Notetaker: Akeria Brown

Notation Abbreviations:

Arl- Arlington
HH- Household

Please share where you live; something about your family (maybe how many children you have?); and if you are working? What you do for a living?

Household make-up	Participant Comment Tag	Occupation	Residence
Single Male	SM1	Semi-retired	Apartment with ASPAN Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) subsidy*
Married Couple + 1 child	MC		Doorways family shelter
Single Female + 2 children (residing with participant's parents)	SF1		Apartment
Single Male	SM2	Volunteer. Recently released from incarceration.	Mother's home*
Single Female	SF2	Social impact professional. Works with various groups throughout community promoting physical and social wellbeing.	Apartment with no housing subsidy*
Single female	ASPIRE	ASPIRE afterschool learning professional.	
Single female	BU-GATA	BU-GATA Tenant Outreach professional	
*Has resided in an Arlington shelter in the past.			

Are there any community organizations you are involved in (PTA, classes, other?)

Participant	Comment
SM2	Volunteers at various organizations throughout the County, including OAR.
SF2	Volunteers with various organizations throughout the community.

6:15 pm Guided Table Conversations 1.1: How well is your housing and neighborhood working for you and your family?

How is your current housing and neighborhood arrangement working for you?

Participant	Comment
SM1	Previously homeless in Arl. Through shelter obtained housing-PSH. Convenient location, public transportation accessible.
SF1	Challenging to find affordable new housing for 30% HHs. Lots of resources available, but if you don't know what to ask for, you don't get the information. Information is not freely disseminated. Many low income HHs perceived as those who will destroy property. Had to move because of housing policy stipulations (income limits).
SM2	Not stable. 30 years old and still lives with family. Previously incarcerated. Worked with OAR. Prior drug addiction. Previously at RPC. Currently at DHS for substance abuse treatment and therapy. Works with employment center to obtain training and job. No challenges to access services. Many services for people to get rehabilitation. Great place to raise family and retire. Convenient location.
BU-GATA	Process of looking for larger home when family expands but lack of income to support larger unit. Families are deciding to move farther out to identify more space.
ASPIRE	Works with teens in Arlington. Many families have had to move out of the County to afford housing.

MC	Great place to live. Can obtain help if you know where the resources are. Did not get the help as a young adult, but did get help once they became parents. Currently in family shelter. RRH case management is excellent. Feels like you must know exactly what to ask for to get the help you need.
SF2	Needs more space because family is growing. However, too expensive to move to larger home. Decided to move to Maryland for more affordable housing. Currently location is convenient. Lots of opportunity here. Schools are great, but will need to move to suit family's needs.

What are the things you just love about your neighborhood and community?

Participant	Comment
SM1, SF1	Close knit community. Shelter services were excellent. Quick transition from homelessness to housing.

6:40 pm **Guided Table Conversations 1.2: What are some of the most important features or characteristics of a community that are important to you?**

How is your space in and around your house working for you and your family?

Participant	Comment
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SM1	Space for single adult is adequate. Older unit. Topography is hilly for people with joint problems. Feels safe in neighborhood.
MC	Clarendon- Never been afraid to walk in neighborhood. Don't see gangs.
SF1	Rosslyn- in older building, but has lots of space. King size bedroom. Safe, quiet, diverse.
SF2	Would like to have more space for children and family.
MC	Rodents. Many of affordable buildings are old and have pest problems. But have more space.
SM1	Windows cheap, don't block sound and makes temperature regulation inconsistent.
MC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utility costs make affordability more challenging. • Shelter case manager assisting with financial goals to prepare for moving into housing. • Previously had to choose which bills to pay because costs were not affordable. • Landlords/maintenance may not be able to communicate information at the level of the need for tenant. • Previously debated on whether to pay electric or water. • Working with organizations in the County allows for exposure to resources, but many who do not have those relationships do not easily have access to. • Challenge is having income and having to answer personal financial questions when in need. • Social services programs consider HH gross income in determining eligibility. However, net income varies greatly from gross.
MC	

Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seemingly, knowing about program availability/existence is one of the most challenging aspects of accessing resources. Apparently, participants feel safe in current living situations. Case management helps with identifying options. With supportive programs, affordability is possible. Great array of services, but finding out about them and knowing where to go is the challenge.
BU-GATA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Older building maintenance (appliances). Repairs can take a long time to get issues resolved. Tenants believe that requests for maintenance will be viewed as negative and landlords may not address future complaints.
ASPIRE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintenance not addressed professionally. Landlords are often disrespectful and condescending to low income HHs. Parents concerned about children playing near construction areas.

7:25 pm Guided Table Conversations 2.1: How easy or hard has it been to find Housing that is Affordable to you and your family?

How easy OR hard has it been to find housing that is affordable in Arlington? –

Participant	Comment
SF1	Searched online extensively for housing. Narrowed options down and began to call each property. Applied to numerous apartments.

SM1	Case manager did the bulk of the work in identifying a unit. Case manager has relationships with landlords.
MC	Once a case manager is involved, assistance is more accessible.
SM2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struggles with substance abuse. Connected with Volunteers of America (VOA) for treatment. • Relapsed and did not get to sober living program. • Would like to find housing, but will not have help of case manager. • Needs employment and access to sober living- Oxford House/Phoenix House. • Recently completed intake at DHS for therapist.
BU-GATA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language barrier in applying for housing as well as ongoing (maintenance, etc.) present considerable hurdles for HHs. • Market rate affordable units don't always take Housing Grants.

8:00 pm SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION 2.2: What resources and/or information have you used (or would like to use?)

Key Themes	Needed Supports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtaining the information and knowing what questions to ask. • Knowing how to access services. • Case Managers make a difference in navigating resources. • Having to repeat your story multiple times to obtain information and resources is often a barrier and very frustrating. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website detailing resources. • Book of resources disseminated annually County-wide. • Packet for new clients outlining resources along with eligibility criteria and ways to access.

Table 12 Notes (Laura Elsberg, Arlington Free Clinic)

5:30 PM Dinner Served Family Style at Tables

Participants:

- Single mom with three kids (15, 9 and 4 months); lives in Nauck neighborhood; lived here 7 years; Rents; 2 bedroom apartment; makes just too much for subsidized housing, but can't afford anything bigger
- Married (female) with 3 kids (boys); lives on Columbia Pike; Rent; 2 bedroom apartment; husband works 2 jobs; makes too much for subsidized housing, but can't afford anything bigger
- Single female with 2-year old daughter; works 2 jobs in Arlington: works at Arlington Parks and Recreation and Arlington After School Teen Program; Rents; mother and grandmother live nearby
- Single female; 2 jobs; assistant at an Arlington Middle School and Arlington After School Teen program; Rents in Maryland. Had to move to MD because it is too expensive in Arlington.
- Single male living in subsidized housing in Lyon Park; was in a shelter before that; he is studying information technology to get a better job; Rents
- Single male living in subsidized housing in N. Arlington; has lived in Arlington for 40 years; went to W&L High School; lived in Arlington 40 year. Rents

Facilitator/Table Host/Notetaker:

- Female. Owns house N. Arlington; married/kids; TJ Middle School
- Female. Married with children; lives near Clarendon; TJ Middle School; owns house
- Female. Married with 2 kids; lives in N. Arlington Madison Manor neighborhood. Has lived in Arlington since 1999. Own house

6:15 Guided Table Conversations 1.1: How well is your housing and neighborhood working for you and your family?

How is your current housing and neighborhood arrangement working for you?

- As kids get bigger, we need more rooms for the entire family. I have 3 kids and only 2 bedrooms. The kids want their own rooms. We are noticing that aspects of our housing are getting more expensive little by little (possibly because of Amazon moving in, but not sure). For example, parking and the gym used to be free in our building, but they aren't free anymore.
- I used to live in Alexandria for \$800 per month rent. This was perfect. Then the rent increased to \$1,300 and I moved back to Arlington (where I work). Street parking on the street is very difficult where I live. In Arlington, I love my building, even though it is old because it is spacious. If I downsize to something newer, it will be more rent and smaller. The older apartment is spacious enough for me and my daughter. (not subsidized housing)
- I have three kids aged 15 (son), 9 and 4 months. The 15 year old needs his privacy, so he is in one bedroom and I share the other bedroom with my 9 year old and the baby. This is hard on the 9 year old. When the baby wakes up, it is hard for her to sleep. The school called me to say that my daughter was too tired. Our apartment is too small, which

affects our quality of life, but I can't afford anything bigger. We make too much for subsidized housing.

- My current housing situation is positive. I live in Lyon Park in subsidized housing, but I used to live in a shelter 2 years ago. My rent is very affordable. My biggest issue is that I am working toward a certificate in IT so that I can get a better job that will pay more. A higher salary will make me ineligible for the housing subsidy. A higher salary or \$35K is not enough to afford housing in Arlington without a subsidy. So I have to choose between a better paying job or subsidized housing.
- I work 2 jobs and do not have a housing subsidy. My checks are so small and don't add up to much. I wonder if it is worth it.
- I work in Arlington, but I can't afford to live in Arlington and had to move to MD (about 30-45 min commute). I have health insurance, but can't afford to get my tooth fixed. I need accessible housing because of a disability, but it is hard to find housing that offers this accessibility (such as bars in the bathroom, etc) that I can also afford (in Md or Arlington). My concern is once I find accessible housing, can I afford it? (not eligible for housing subsidies)
- I can't afford anything extra and can barely pay my bills. Extended Day, for example, is very expensive and I need before and after care so I can get to work. My big question is, with Amazon moving in, will the County increase the income limit for housing subsidies? I make a little too much for the subsidies, but I can't afford anything bigger.

What are the things you just love about your neighborhood and community?

- Love to walk and take the bus
- 4 other people: We love to walk
- I love Arlington, but live in MD because I can't afford it.

What opportunities or challenges do you have in accessing services, transportation, and others?

- Food is a positive thing; the nearby Harris Teeter is very convenient and cheaper than other grocery stores.
- I like Whole Foods because they have a lot of organic food
- Columbia Pike has a lot of buses
- There is a no grocery store close to the Nauck neighborhood, which is inconvenient. Sometimes it is cheaper to go to McDonalds than buy fresh food.
- I work 2 jobs and often go to AFAC's "day old" food distributions to make the rest of my food last longer. I get bruised vegetables and rice. The only thing I splurge on is alkaline water at Harris Teeter.

Guided Table Conversations 1.2 what are some of the most important features or characteristics of a community that are important to you?

How is your space in and around your house working for you and your family?

- Being able to purchase a home one day (versus continuing renting) is big concern. Right now I rent and can't afford to buy a home in Arlington. If I move somewhere cheaper to buy a home, the kids are pulled out of schools, which is hard on them. They don't want to lose their friends. If I don't buy a home, how will I get ahead?

- I don't want to move because my husband's business is near where we live. The kids also don't want to move because they have their friends. I am in the same position, though. I can't afford to buy anything in Arlington and our apartment is too small for 3 kids (2 bedroom).

How does your current housing meet your family needs? What, if any needs are not being met?

- People who work here have to commute. People like to walk to their job.
- High water bill
- I wish I had a washer/dryer in my apartment
- I have a disability and need accessible housing, which is hard to find (currently lives in MD because Arlington is too expensive).
- My mother and grandma live in the same housing complex and take care of my daughter while I am at work. I am worried I will be renting for the rest of my life. I want to own something, but I can't afford it. It's \$200K for a "matchbox" house/townhouse in Arlington.
- I am used to chaos and lots of people in our apartment because that's how I was raised in my country. My kids have grown up in Arlington and are not used to tight space and relatives coming to stay with us for long periods of time (and little space). They don't like it.
- Sometimes I have to pay other bills late so that I can pay my rent (high-cost) on time. We can't take vacations, we don't eat out, because it is so expensive to live in Arlington. (does not qualify for subsidized housing).

How safe and secure do you feel in your neighborhood? And around your home?

- All participants said they felt safe in Arlington
- Nauck is a close community and the people who live near me know each other and are safe. Sometimes unsafe things happen near me, but I think it is by people who don't live there. I had to move farther up the street to be in a safer apartment building.

Guided Table Conversations 2.1: How easy or hard has it been to find Housing that is Affordable to you and your family?

How easy or hard has it been to find housing that is affordable in Arlington?

- My caseworker helped me find housing and was very helpful.
- my grant-supported housing was easy to find
- (Note: Participants who did not have subsidized housing all said it was challenging to find affordable housing in Arlington. They currently do not live in affordable housing with sufficient space for their family or accommodations needed for a disability (one person).

How is your relationship with your landlord, property manager, or other staff?

- They don't treat you the same if you live in cheaper housing (even if you are not subsidized)
- I agree. I had to be my own advocate to get severe housing issues fixed. I don't have a case manager because I make a little too much for subsidized housing, but I am



educated and I am not afraid to advocate for myself. Some issues that I had to advocate for fixing: (1) my apartment flooded and they took up the carpet and put the same carpet back down; (2) neighbors who smoked and were not supposed to smoke based on building regulations, but they still smoked; the smoke came through the vents and I have kids with asthma who can't breathe it in without medical effects. I had to go to the main office on Lee Highway to finally get action when the building manager wouldn't do anything. I am well educated and speak English, but it would have been very difficult to do this type of advocacy if I had language barriers. What is the county doing to ensure that building managers are following their own rules and regulations? It's not enough for the buildings to have rules and regulations. How does the County oversee and enforce them?

- I used to be in a cheaper building and neighbors complained about kids being noisy. The building manager showed up and was really rude and disrespectful. Now that we live in a building that costs a little more, we get more respect.

What are some of the challenges that you are experiencing with your housing?

Percent of income spent on housing:

- Over 50%
- 2/3 of my income is spent on rent
- \$1800 per month on rent for 2 bedroom not including utilities

Are there other things beyond affordability that makes it hard?

- I have a disability and have to pay \$4 per month for handicap space (in MD)

Other

Requirements of builders regarding affordable housing

- Question: Are builders in Arlington required to have affordable housing when they build new apartments?
- Arlington County staff response: There is a requirement, but the developers have a choice in how they meet the affordable housing requirement: (1) build units onsite; (2) build units offsite; (3) write the county a check, but there is some county discretion on how this is spent and may not result in an increase in the number of affordable housing units (the builders usually do this). It is tricky because in Arlington, the only option is "to go up" (e.g. build higher).
- Participant comment: how will there be more housing if developers aren't required to build affordable housing?

Table 13

5:30 pm Dinner Served Family Style at Tables:

Please share where you live; something about your family (maybe how many children you have?); and if you are working? What you do for a living?

- We moved to Prince William (Woodbridge) because of the rise in housing costs (we were living in Gates of Ballston) but still work, do laundry, etc in Arlington.
- Rent has gone up recently, about 180 a month for “maintenance reasons” but we don’t think there really is much maintenance
- I work in construction
- I work as a school assistant, but it’s a yearly contract

Are there any community organizations you are involved in (PTA, classes, other?)

Didn’t discuss

How did you first hear about Arlington? What attracted you to Arlington that made you want to move here?

- Resources, transportation are really good in Arlington

How long have you lived here? Rent or own? How did you find your first home here?

- Rent
- 25 years
- 35 years
- 5 years
- majority found on their own

6:15 pm Guided Table Conversations 1.1: How well is your housing and neighborhood working for you and your family?

How is your current housing and neighborhood arrangement working for you? (Similar to question: What are the things you just love about your neighborhood and community?)

- Where I live it’s calm/quiet. Can catch bus, metro, no problems there. Not much crime. Very peaceful. Stores nearby (Glebe Market, CVS by Buckingham Gardens).
- idea of calmness/convenient/quiet are was echoed 3 times
- One person: want more security in my neighborhood. Buchanan Gardens—6 months ago different people arrived and hit cars, my and my wife’s cars were struck. I think the apartments should have cameras or security. Could be an improvement there.

-Anita- some people might not want to be on camera, so there are concerns there.

- People nodding yes in agreement.
- Greenbriar and C. Pike: good maintenance, inspections are good since they can detect rats, bugs, etc.

-Anita: what’s not good?

- rats. They’ve finished remodeling but problem when they removed Food Star (since nearby) there are now lots of rats because of the construction. We used to live by Wendys on C. Pike but maintenance doesn’t do anything. Asked for Shoe molding but nothing been’s done. Pest control- they just put glue traps and we can do that ourselves, but we don’t move from there because our parents are there too, the apartments are pretty but their difficult
- street lights (not enough or dark)
- majority live near: Shirlington, C. Pike, Glebe/Pershing



-moved away due to costs—Gates of Ballston the rents went up too much.

-Do you have enough space? Or too crowded?

- space is good. Echoed twice.
- apartment for 3, 5 people live there.
- 1 room- seems like a 2 bedroom with walk-in closet so space is good
- 1 room- lives alone
- 2 rooms, 5 live there
- 2 rooms, 4 live there
- 2 rooms

-if you could move somewhere else, where would you go or would you stay in Arlington?

- transportation
- rent goes up 100-150 each year a month. Beautiful area but expensive.

Where are people moving?

- Richmond, Manassas, Woodbridge, Maryland, Fredericksburg (900 for a 3 bedroom rent)
- because of the cost
- only convenient to move that far if your travel (commute) is close to work

-Amount of time to work:

- 15 minutes, 45 minutes—distance is close to work
- housewife-so no commute

-Aside from transport and cost of living, what do you use?

- learning how to use computer at Clarendon House, work at gym to lose weight,
- libraries are great
- our apartment (AHC) has afterschool programs, they help with kids right after work, plus they have summer camps
- Same in Arlington Mill- Aspire after school program (Notetaker note: 2 families use Aspire; the Americorps staff joined the table towards the end)
- when we lived here, we used food benefits, could go with your bag to AFAC
- 3 others use AFAC for food.
- it's [AFAC] really good, like a market, you get milk, eggs, cereal etc. Information provided for how to get referral. Notetaker: 2 people provided information since they weren't aware of it.
- I've been told in past that because of my husband's job I can't get benefits (like child's insurance)
- schools: Kenmore, Career Center, Arlington, Key School.

Anita asked What do you think about schools? Are they good?

- Yes.
- Kenmore- issue is the transport, it's close but the roads and sidewalks are too narrow and kids push one another, there have been 3 accidents by Carlin Springs and Kenmore. We've talked about it and nothing.

-Cost of services: Is transportation costly or not? Like bus, metro

- I remember a little bit ago, it was 1.50 and went up, about 8 a day, last week the bus people went and they asked students to buy them for \$1? (Notetaker note: inaudible and unclear what was said).

-How do you manage the costs, the payments?

- Section 8 (Housing Choice Voucher)
- no. My husband has work but if he didn't work on the side the money wouldn't be enough

**What are the things you just love about your neighborhood and community?
(answered above)**

What opportunities or challenges do you have in accessing services, transportation, and others?

- Notetaker note: not directly asked, indirectly answered via other questions.

6:40 pm Guided Table Conversations 1.2: What are some of the most important features or characteristics of a community that are important to you?

How is your space in and around your house working for you and your family?

-Your housing and space, lets talk a bit about that. Is it big or not, are your needs met living there? Are the costs...have you had to stop payments for something in order to keep paying for your hosing/to keep living there?

-is the space Good, do you want a bigger space; are you happy with the size?

- new buildings are smaller than the older ones. It's like a kitchen and living room in one. Lived in The Fields. The newer ones are smaller.
- where I live it's fine.
- light/electricity about 360 dollars/month. So I went to 4th floor of DHS Aging and Disability, they told me I needed to wait until someone helps to pay

-can you always pay electricity?

- us sometimes. Get disconnection notice, but then we need to catch up.
- We have to pay lights, gas, water separately.

-when you received that notice what did you do?

- went to DHS but they didn't want to help me. I understand there are certain rules and income rules.
- I made too much money
- Our lady queen of peace has helped, on walter reed/glebe/19th street. They give food once a week as well, every Thursdays give you food (oil, Maseca, different items) first time bring ID, don't ask you what you make. They enroll you with a card and you can get food. If you have babies they have diapers
- Anita clarified by asking, so you mentioned AFAC and Our Lady Queen of Peace that you use to be able to afford your bills?**
- Gates of Ballston give food through AFAC once a week

-food stamps

- woman: I didn't get enough
- 15 a month

-Do you get Medicaid, other health services?

- some don't qualify

-Anita provided an explanation and awareness of health services:

- pay for health costs and you can apply online or at DHS and if you have residency, you can get a card, like an insurance card, and then use it to go to the clinic when you're sick. New as of 2019 January.**
- there are 2 principal clinics where you can get medical attention without paying**



-Arlington Free Clinic (3 know of it)-Walter Reed & C. Pike.

-Neighborhood Health- a clinic in Arlandria but also in DHS building they have a new office with 2, a nurse and a dr. If you don't have insurance or residency it doesn't matter. If you do have insurance, they'll accept you.

-you shouldn't suffer and by not getting medical help. There are services. Even for kids, immunizations, vaccinations, are also free in Arlington. Make sure to send your kids to get vaccinated

-taxes:

-had issue getting taxes done for free because they didn't understand my situation. Americans have been nice but Latinos have been negative.

-my coworker had problems at Sequoia clinic where they take care of kids and they were treated wrong. My friend couldn't come tonight.

-Anita gave out her cards so people can contact her if there are any issues, if someone treats her wrong. No one should be treated wrong in her building.

(Notetaker: this was very much appreciated by everyone at the table. People were in thankful and surprised that she would offer her card and number.)

How safe and secure do you feel in your neighborhood? And around your home? Asked by the following questions:

-what do you feel about your living spaces about being Hispanic/Latino in your neighborhood? Do you feel discrimination.

-its always existed, there are people who want you to feel less but no one should feel that way

-parks- sometimes people ask if I have papers

-a year ago, my best friend, her whole family is from Guatemala and they were having a party for her youngest daughter in the park, and a person (notetaker: not sure if said man or woman) came up to them and started to yell at them. My friend had DACA, the person said he would call people to take them away. Those papers were stolen, etc. The family was scared so much the following year they didn't have a party in the park.

-each time we've been from park to park to explore, but haven't had problems

-the county is good compared to other areas, I can go anywhere and in DC the security in DC is horrible. But compared to Arlington, they have good security, the response time of police is fast, probably because of the proximity to Pentagon and DC, quick response. I works in Fairfax, sometimes in Arlington, you don't see abuses from the police compared to other cities and areas.

-no questions being asked by police?

-no

-police and ambulance is good, they arrive quickly

-when I was 14, there were lots of gangs and marijuana, because Officer Rodriguez would keep an eye on things, put kids in gang unit prevention programs, there was more respect for youth. As of 4 years ago, doesn't matter as much. Not much care towards youth as before.

-Reiterated Mark Schwartz' comment about Census and federal funding of Housing in Arlington: On April 1st, 2020 the census will be conducted (where each person is counted in Arlington, regardless of residential status). Trying to do a campaign during this year so people know when 4-1-2020 they should put their information regardless of being a citizen or having papers, no need to worry about having immigration called. This affects representation in congress, housing funds, etc. There's a specific, fixed budget.

-if you don't answer, it will affect the resources and help you have.

-question about citizenship in Census, but still hasn't been approved.



-I think it's more important to give number but not status (person was reassuring people to answer the census)

How does your current housing meet your family needs? What, if any needs are not being met?
(Notetaker: this was answered throughout)

7:25 pm Guided Table Conversations 2.1: How easy or hard has it been to find Housing that is Affordable to you and your family?

How easy or hard has it been to find housing that is affordable in Arlington? Does it take a long time or do you quickly find out and get an answer/notified of housing?

- when i arrived, my husband already had housing. He found housing easily
- problem is people look for community feeling, the price. There are apartments.
 - lived on n. glebe by rosslyn, cheap but where I am now it's pretty but prices are going up. My friends told me about it.
- we knew about it.
- the difficulty is being able to rent the apartments, not all apartments accept ID numbers and only take social security. If you have credit and desposit. Its difficult meeting requirements but finding the apartment is easy.
- now you can get it with tax id number or social,

-how do you show you have credit?

- they do a credit check
- depending on company its tough
- need 1 month rent and deposit

-do you borrow, save, go to loan depot? How do you pay for it?

- save
- tax season people take advantage of refund, savings.

-do you have bank accounts or save money under the bed?

- savings.
- should be more access to deposit (notetaker: apartment rental deposit). Its hard to, the money [deposit] is returned at end but that's if they don't come up with some excuse. Its be good to use deposit for something else.
- theres a new program in Arlington: homeless prevention, to help you pay for deposit. But same problem, if you don't fall under requirements you don't qualify. More resources for someone that doesn't work.
- its tough to pay if right above the requirements

-organization that helped you get your place

- housing grant

-no one else gets housing grants? Why didn't you get any?

- doesn't cover rent. 1 bedroom about 1000 or 1400

-Anita brought up that in July of this year, new fiscal year, they are talking about increasing the amounts they pay for housing grants. There was a limit for how much to pay that hadn't changed since 2010. Went to Mark, told him the rental prices are rising and the amount of housing grants hasn't risen in about 10 years. Voting in April to increase housing grants. If it passes, Maximum Allowable Rents to go up for housing grants. Vote April 23rd. According to unit size. Proposal by County Manager to County Board.



- Next Tuesday, board meeting
- housing choice voucher pays more than housing grants
- housing choice voucher waitlist- can sign up in July
- Question: do you know what requirements there are for housing grants?
 - greater 62 years
 - disability physical or mental
 - family, people over 18 with kids and work 30 hours a week
 - below a certain income limit

-living 45 minutes away is tough and would like to live in Arlington, it'd be good to have list or paper (notetaker: with information). with \$1200 for one person is tough. What about for students?

-None exists.

-DMV every quarter, in June, can get an id at 2100 Wash Blvd and they do ids, driver license, car registration in their building.

Anita mentioned: Resources available today:

- housing choice voucher (section 8) for rental assistance, federal grant
- housing grant program- county funded program, also rental assistance
- home ownership assistance-

How is your relationship with your landlord, property manager, or other staff? do they treat you well do they respond to problems?

-yes, 24 hours.

-I just moved and they're good

-problems with manager of building. Yes, lots. They don't take things seriously when asked, they think we are asking them something they don't need to do. We ask about things that are bad, like lights, that they should fix. They answer rudely, don't want to help, don't answer, say they're busy. At Virginia Gardens/Taylor Square properties (AHC).

-AHC boss, she helps a lot but she can't control maintenance at all properties of AHC

-Who has heard of help for utility and energy costs? (not many familiar, pointed to table of resources)

-winter bills I pay, some summer. Two different periods they pay

-where I live, is it changed every 5 years the carpets need to be changed?

-Depends on what contract says.

When you have questions, ex don't know about utilities information. Where do you get help and ask for help? Your friends, computer?

-technology is more advanced, you can search the internet

-career center, services department

-community center, they put up flyers, resources coordinator. Also in Gates of Ballston, Greenbriar, Buckingham etc. they have computer to fill out applications, help, etc.

-flyers in buildings

-tv channel of Arlington: they give you activities, closed metro lines, etc. all information on that channel.

-social services, director of section 8 has helped me find housing

-Mathilda- case manager helps me find apartment

What are some of the challenges that you are experiencing with your housing?
-discussed above

Are there other things beyond affordability, that have been limiting? Makes it hard?
-discussed above

8:00 pm SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION 2.2: What resources and/or information have you used (or would like to use?)

Is anyone familiar with resources available for getting assistance and/or addressing challenges? (eviction, rent, housing grants)
-discussed above and pointed to table

How did you come to learn about living where you live now? And did you learn about your current housing opportunity?
-discussed above

Not asked: Were there organizations or people that helped you with your move?

Not asked: Do you feel like you would be able to move independently at some point?

Not asked directly: What types of supports have been/would be helpful for you to maintain your housing?

FOLLOW UP ITEMS: NONE

Main Themes from Table:

- high cost of living
- sometimes management doesn't listen to them or feel like being charged more for no reason
- help to pay utilities
 - not all assistance helps everyone, different characteristics, limits, rules and you need to know what they are for each program.
- majority felt safe/secure in their neighborhood/apartment but thought cost of living was high
- valued proximity to work, short commute, neighborhood, schools, resources and assistance (resident services staff, career center/school services, social services, DHS), after school services for kids (like those offered by Aspire or AHC) but sometimes felt some unpleasantries from staff/volunteers or some people (some in particular felt it was from individuals that were Latino so they didn't understand why they felt that way if they were of the same culture). At least 3-4 out of the group had at one point felt this way, experienced it, or heard of friends experiencing this.
- majority had used some sort of assistance before or asked for help with food or rent/utilities.

NOTES FROM TABLE 14

Brooke Hammond-Perez and Alice Hogan

5:30 pm Dinner Served Family Style at Tables:

Please share where you live; something about your family (maybe how many children you have?); and if you are working? What you do for a living?

Nauck – Buckingham – West Columbia Pike – Douglas Park – Courthouse

Federal government – APS – full time student – retired – disabled – office work

4 single and living alone, one married

Are there any community organizations you are involved in (PTA, classes, other?)

How did you first hear about Arlington? What attracted you to Arlington that made you want to move here?

4 Arlington natives; 2 moved here – one with a recommendation

How long have you lived here? Rent or own? How did you find your first home here?

All rent except one who owns and was able to purchase through AHC many years ago. Finding an apartment is very hard – there is not live list of available, affordable units. Two have Housing Grants; One has a HC Voucher; 2 live in PSH through ASPAN.

6:15 pm Guided Table Conversations 1.1: How well is your housing and neighborhood working for you and your family?

How is your current housing and neighborhood arrangement working for you?

What are the things you just love about your neighborhood and community?

The bus is nearby and I can get everywhere!
Love Nauck community – people help each other in the neighborhood.
Grocery store nearby.
I'm a homeowner!
Walkability
Another needs a grocery closer to home
Neighborhood feels safe.

What opportunities or challenges do you have in accessing services, transportation, and others?

Nauck needs a community space where MS and HS students can safely hang out after school – used to have a community center and now they just hang around outside Drew with nothing to do. There used to be dances and activities in years past for teens.

They need skills training and help seeing there is a future job after HS if you don't choose college.

APAH unit – resident wants better mix of programs – not all residents need to learn English or how to use a computer – feels stereotyped. Please don't assume our needs are all the same just because we are lower income.

Retired/disabled resident cannot afford his unit at Harvey Hall. He said his rent rose but his HG did not and he is on the verge of homelessness.

6:40 pm Guided Table Conversations 1.2: What are some of the most important features or characteristics of a community that are important to you?

How is your space in and around your house working for you and your family?

Greenbrier Apts – good situation

Springs Apts – nice neighborhood and good building but 3 years and still waiting for gym equipment in the exercise room.

Harvey Hall – management needs to be more responsive to repair calls – not our fault something breaks.

Shelton – everyone is paying \$100-\$150 water bills Every Month! Why is that? Units have no meters so how do you know how much we use? One family was gone for a month and still had that size bill. Also repairs take 2-3 months to get done.

Ballston Park Apts – needs upgrading very badly – mold and old windows, some ceilings have holes and stuff is coming down.

Marbella – rain last fall and they didn't repair the roof problem for 1 ½ months. Also leasing office staff is rude and dismissive – staff just turned over so maybe will be better now.

How does your current housing meet your family needs? What, if any needs are not being met?

Parking in Buckingham area is very challenging.

Towing company is unfair and charges way too much.

Marbella – does resident survey but services don't change.

How safe and secure do you feel in your neighborhood? And around your home?

Lighting is a problem:

N. Quinn and N. Queen Streets at Marbella – street lights are out

S. Oakland near Walter Reed Drive – not enough lights



7:25 pm Guided Table Conversations 2.1: How easy or hard has it been to find Housing that is Affordable to you and your family?

How easy OR hard has it been to find housing that is affordable in Arlington?

Hard to find affordable apartments in the community. Where do you look? You have to go to every complex one by one and put your name on waiting lists. Most of them told me 4 or 5 year wait.

How is your relationship with your landlord, property manager, or other staff?

It is not easy.

Utilities are being charged on top of rent – with all that its not affordable anymore.

What are some of the challenges that you are experiencing with your housing?

There's no real-time list of available apartments.
Have to call every complex to apply.

Are there other things beyond affordability, that have been limiting? Makes it hard?

Very concerned about Amazon – how will the rents go up and will we (us or our adult children) get a chance at those jobs?

8:00 pm SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION 2.2: What resources and/or information have you used (or would like to use?)

Is anyone familiar with resources available for getting assistance and/or addressing challenges? (eviction, rent, housing grants)

Housing Choice Vouchers and Housing Grants.
PSH through ASPAN.

How did you come to learn about living where you live now? And did you learn about your current housing opportunity?

Were there organizations or people that helped you with your move?

Do you feel like you would be able to move independently at some point?

What types of supports have been/would be helpful for you to maintain your housing?

NOTES: Table 15 (Spanish)

Host: Aseret D'Alessio

Facilitator: Russell Danao-Schroeder

Notetaker: Malissa McSwain
9 community members

Guided Table Conversations 1.1: How well is your housing and neighborhood working for you and your family?

How is your current housing and neighborhood arrangement working for you?

What are the things you just love about your neighborhood and community? What opportunities or challenges do you have in accessing services, transportation, and others?

- I like the area where I live (Columbia Pike); it's beautiful and central, I can easily get to work and to Clarendon where my kids go to school
 - o We've been there for 10 years, since moving to Arlington/to USA
 - o The only problem is that it's expensive but what can you do?
- It's nice because there's not much conflict, the kids can go outside
 - o Our one complaint is that the hallways are dirty
 - o We don't want to say anything to the manager because we don't want him paying too much attention to us; so we stay quiet about any issues
- I agree—I live on Quincy & Columbia Pike
 - o The area is nice with easy access to public transportation
 - o My apartment is well-maintained, with a garden
 - o But the rent is expensive; I pay a discounted rate of \$1600
 - For me alone that is too much, so I live with another family (not because I want to, but out of necessity)
- I live on Four Mile Run & Columbia Pike and I like the area
 - o Thankfully there's not much crime around there
 - o I don't qualify for a house—here in Arlington it would cost upwards of \$500,000 whereas I see that other cities have houses closer to \$180,000
 - In other words, if I want a house I have to leave
 - o It'd be better not to give so much money to Amazon and invest in us instead
- I love Arlington, I live close to the Columbia Grove property
 - o It's safe and secure, clean
 - o There's a mutual respect, not too much noise or drama
 - o But rent is expensive, seems like it's getting worse and worse
 - o We need some sort of reduction for those of us who don't qualify for other options
- It's difficult. Because I like the area, we're close to so much, it's safe, but we've had some problems finding a place to live
 - o We got a voucher back when they gave them to a bunch of people (like 1500)—we visited everywhere on the list but there were no openings
 - I didn't want to leave Arlington, so we rented privately where the owner accepts our voucher
 - I'm worried that he's going to decide that he could make more money renting to someone else; I'd like to move to an APAH apartment where I have the peace of mind that we won't be kicked out
 - o I have a child with special needs and overall Arlington does have a lot of good programs and supports
 - o On March 18th they opened a new property and its waitlist
 - I have a complaint—to get Medicaid we have to be below a certain income level, but to rent there we need to be above that limit
 - Table Host—Actually, if you have a voucher you don't need to meet those income requirements



- I like the community where I live right now (Gates of Ballston)
 - o Easy access to transportation
 - o But the neighbors make me uncomfortable—they smoke marijuana and there's lots of noise
 - o The management team is very attentive, they listen and offer good service
 - o There is security (a police presence) during the weekends and during the day it feels fine
 - But at night the environment becomes more tense and scary
 - People with mental problems go around knocking on doors for no reason
 - I've had to call the police because of disturbances like that
 - I would like more attention from police consistently
 - o I don't have any sort of voucher
- We all know Arlington is a nice place to live, good transportation
 - o I think it's so expensive because living here means a good life; it's been named the best county in the country and it's very special

Guided Table Conversations 1.2: What are some of the most important features or characteristics of a community that are important to you?

How is your space in and around your house working for you and your family?

How does your current housing meet your family needs? What, if any needs are not being met?

How safe and secure do you feel in your neighborhood? And around your home?

- It is safe, but I feel like it's becoming less so; personally I haven't had any problems though
 - o I've lived in the same place for 14 years and they've never raised the rent even by \$50
 - o We were living in a family room and someone complained but now we do live with another family
 - o The only thing negatively affecting us is that they're building a new building so there's more traffic and less parking
 - o Overall we're content though
- The safety in Arlington is good
 - o I feel comfortable with what I pay, the only thing I wish is that I could get a house
 - o I have a 2-bedroom apartment and it's not too expensive, I know if I moved I'd pay way more—for that reason my options are limited
 - o Everyone earns a different salary, some more than others, and none of us want to move away from our families our make our kids change schools
- Host: We offer 2 bedroom apartments for \$1400 just so you know
- Our area (Westmont Gardens) has everything we need—parks, a pool area, good parking
 - o But there have been car break-ins
 - o The rent is expensive and it goes up every year
 - o We have to stay there though because everything will become more expensive once Amazon moves here
- They're constructing a new building on George Mason and Columbia Pike and another one on Glebe and Columbia Pike
 - o My daughter walks to school; there's a lot of traffic (not just cars but scooters, etc.) so now I feel more comfortable walking with her
 - o I do worry about the children's safety walking to and from school
- Our rooms aren't that nice
 - o We have to pay electricity and some months it's way more than others
 - o There's not enough parking—it fills up by 8pm each night



- I've applied several times to Arlington Mill
 - But my son doesn't want to move schools; when I brought up moving he started crying
- Also I don't drive so location/being close to a school is important
- The security is good where we live but the apartments are really old
 - And they charge a lot for such old apartments
 - We suffer in the winter and summer because it's too cold or hot
 - Limited parking
 - We have to pay for utilities and everyone complains because they're so high
 - We don't move because we don't want to go somewhere where the manager/landlord checks in too much
 - We're pretty suspicious of the police
 - Even when we probably should call the police we don't because we're scared
- I feel the same way; a few weeks ago I found a bunch of marijuana in the hallways but I just ignored it because I didn't want them to ask for my papers
- Host & Facilitator: I understand the fear but also the policy here in Arlington is that they should not be asking those details if they're called
- In my complex we always call the police if someone is outside smoking for too long
- For me the security is really good; they always resolve the issues quickly and efficiently
- At my place the smell of marijuana is so strong my kids' clothes smell like it at school and the teachers have noticed
- I get that marijuana is more and more common because it can be medicinal but I don't want it being used all around me

Guided Table Conversations 2.1: How easy or hard has it been to find Housing that is Affordable to you and your family?

How easy OR hard has it been to find housing that is affordable in Arlington? How is your relationship with your landlord, property manager, or other staff? What are some of the challenges that you are experiencing with your housing? Are there other things beyond affordability, that have been limiting? Makes it hard?

- The staff at my building is very attentive, I can easily communicate with them by phone or email
 - However, my parents live in a different building and they've had a lot of problems with management. I feel like they're being discriminated against because they don't speak English...
 - I gave my notice at Marbella but then I couldn't find somewhere else to live so, 15 days before I was supposed to move out I asked for an extension
 - They refused, and basically said that if I didn't move out on time all of my stuff would be out in the streets
 - Something that has caused me problems is that I have asthma and the dust in the carpet irritates me
- Another complaint—when you're on the waitlist for affordable housing and they call you, you only have a really short time to make your decision
 - You have no time to work everything out with your current landlord
- Host: actually the 48-hour window is just to confirm that you're still interested and to make an appointment with the office... then they do an interview and ask for all of your information
- Well we have to give 2 months' notice if we're leaving so that makes it hard

- Various side conversations: What is that program when you pay half and the government pays the other half?

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION 2.2: What resources and/or information have you used (or would like to use?)

Is anyone familiar with resources available for getting assistance and/or addressing challenges? (eviction, rent, housing grants). How did you come to learn about living where you live now? And did you learn about your current housing opportunity? Were there organizations or people that helped you with your move? Do you feel like you would be able to move independently at some point? What types of supports have been/would be helpful for you to maintain your housing?

[No one at the table has ever heard of the three resources mentioned]

Host explains some common difficulties with accessing resources; there is a group not being served by the available resources because the requirements are so specific

- Facilitator: housing grants are designed for specific groups

Host and Facilitator explain requirements for different programs; talk about cosigners, credit, gross/net income

- Can someone hold your spot in an apartment if you're finishing out a different lease?
- Host: No, subleasing of affordable units is illegal
- Does Arlington have a program to help you buy a house?

Table 16

5:30 pm Dinner Served Family Style at Tables:

Please share where you live; something about your family (maybe how many children you have?); and if you are working? What you do for a living?

- Barcroft (apartment)
- The Springs (apartment)
- Ballston (single family house, with his daughter and her family)
- Ballston Park (apartment)
- George Mason Drive (single family house, rents a room)
- Key Blvd Apartments (apartment)
- Gates of Ballston (apartment)

Are there any community organizations you are involved in (PTA, classes, other?)

- Barrett PTA
- Kenmore PTA

How did you first hear about Arlington? What attracted you to Arlington that made you want to move here?

How long have you lived here? Rent or own? How did you find your first home here?

- 6 months
- 12 years
- 18 years
- 20 years
- 8 years



- 30 years

6:15 pm Guided Table Conversations 1.1: How well is your housing and neighborhood working for you and your family?

How is your current housing and neighborhood arrangement working for you?

- Needs maintenance, but I like that I am near the bus stop, grocery store, my children's school and other places I need to go. (Barcroft)
- Utilities are very expensive, and the management company where I live can't explain what the charges are for. I want to make sure I am paying for what I use, and that I am not paying the same as those who live in larger apartments with more people.
- I know all of my neighbors, my children can walk around the neighborhood and to the school. The community is very supportive. We always know what is going on with one another. (The Springs)
- I live with my daughter and she takes care of everything. I don't like that it's so dark at night.
- The streets are very, very dark. There is a church near my house, where a woman was assaulted and robbed.
- There is not enough light at night. Someone tried to attack my sister and she luckily escaped, but the street was very dark.
- We need more affordable housing. No one can qualify for Section 8 or a housing grant. Even though they say that there are affordable housing programs, so many people still can't qualify.
- Even though I have a housing grant, my grant did not increase even when my husband passed away. How are we helping people when they need it most?
- I don't ever see a policeman. It wasn't like that when I moved to Arlington 30 years ago.
- I don't feel safe in Manassas or Maryland. So many Latinos have been deported for the laws that have been passed there. Arlington is the best but it is also expensive.

What are the things you just love about your neighborhood and community?

- My husband and I walk to work, there are so many things nearby. Taking a bus would take me much longer.
- I feel very safe.
- I take my kids to the playground.
- Public transportation is very accessible.

What opportunities or challenges do you have in accessing services, transportation, and others?

- More parks and playgrounds are needed in the Ballston area.

6:40 pm Guided Table Conversations 1.2: What are some of the most important features or characteristics of a community that are important to you?

How is your space in and around your house working for you and your family?

- My rent increased from \$1200 to \$1500/month all of a sudden. When I asked the rental manager, I could not get any further information and it was frustrating.
- My living room and kitchen are too small, even though I am thankful to have a home.



- So many homes in Arlington are old and they have not been updated for the 21st century. They need modernization. Because they are old, the owners rent them for a lower cost, but don't offer a good service. We work just to pay the rent, life is so expensive in Arlington. In Manassas, I was there last week and the prices are so different. (Barcroft)
- My apartment is new, I can't complain about the modernity of my apartment. (The Springs)
- Two years ago, I moved from Arlington to Colorado with my husband and two children. Then one day, a child in my son's school overdosed (on illegal drugs). He was in 7th grade. I didn't know how much of a problem illegal drugs were. Then there was a gun fight outside our apartment building. So we decided we needed to leave even though my husband had a lot of work there. We wanted to move back to Maryland because it was more affordable than Arlington, but we didn't qualify for any apartments. So we applied in Arlington and we qualified immediately. We are so glad to be back.

How does your current housing meet your family needs? What, if any needs are not being met?

How safe and secure do you feel in your neighborhood? And around your home?

- There are not enough street lights, which makes me feel unsafe.
- I have noticed that stores and retail locations close at 9 pm. I think that the County should extend their hours so that they can serve people who don't get home until late.
- I think that the water drains should be covered so that the animals can't get in or out from down there.
- I would like more recycling options in the apartment buildings. We don't have a recycling option where I live, just the trash containers. (Gates of Ballston)

7:25 pm Guided Table Conversations 2.1: How easy or hard has it been to find Housing that is Affordable to you and your family?

How easy OR hard has it been to find housing that is affordable in Arlington?

How is your relationship with your landlord, property manager, or other staff?

- We don't have a problem with our landlord.

What are some of the challenges that you are experiencing with your housing?

- I went to apply for SNAP and it was a bad experience going to DHS. I really need it. Everyone knows other people who 'need' assistance, but they don't really need it.
- Some people at DHS are very rude.
- In the County, there are a lot of people who only help their friends.
- For me, it was really hard and I wanted to apply for SNAP. And they were really rude. And then someone called me and they only gave me benefits for two months. There are some people where the two adults work and they still get help. It wasn't until I began participating in the 200 Bridges program that I was able to get SNAP and now have enough food for myself and my children.
- The company that manages the APAH properties do not listen. How can we talk to APAH about this?

TABLE 18. This was a table of TEENS but several late arriving ADULTS were placed at the table



How well is housing working for you? Tell us about your neighborhood?

- Need safer streets, no crosswalks Columbia pike & Walter reed
- some kids at our table don't know the neighborhood
- don't like to be next to noisy Ballston area. Lives in townhouse likes the townhouse because of upstairs is away from crowds
- I live in a shelter in Arlington, before that I was in Alexandria
- I stay in room at the shelter because there are lots of people cursing
- I'm looking for housing for me and my baby, I need a real affordable home. But since I'm can't get \$ support. Documentation challenge for me.
- I currently in small apartment, rooms are smaller than the bathroom, kitchen is small too
- We have a great dog park is well designed, but our building is not so great
- I live in new apartment with an open floor plan. I'd prefer an with separate dining, kitchen. The apartment lacks storage, and there's no linen closet.
- I probably not work if I had a baby
- I like my apartment and like the building and I have closets
- My apartment has big rooms
- At my apartment I'm always hearing airplanes and my baby wakes up when the plan goes by
- I could use more space
- I live in the shelter. It lacks of privacy. Anyone can walk in, don't feel comfortable with that situation

Do you know your neighbors?

- yes, I have one helpful neighbor
- in my building people are friendly, some of us do social things together - non teen
- My dads aunt lives nearby, so it's good so I sometimes see her
- Arlington is expensive, but I like the access to food and stores in Clarendon

Transportation?

- I'm one block from Clarendon metro so transportation is good



- I live 10 min from courthouse and Clarendon and mostly use public transportation
- I use Lyft
- My mom wants me to take the public bus but I'd rather walk
- Living in Rosslyn, don't need to take the train, can just walk

What would be an Ideal neighborhood?

- Less expensive, where I can get help with utilities, and have more privacy.
- perfect neighborhood is where people talk to you and are friendly
- I don't know anyone in my neighborhood
- Greenwich village

How is the housing working for you? Does it meet your needs? Is the neighborhood safe and secure?

Affordability Other expenses:

- challenges to find a place to live - I have no idea about expenses as parents and county are taking care of everything. I would rather be in California
- I need help with electricity, bills vary with the with the weather so I can't establish a stable budget. But I get free childcare
- I pay for water & electricity and medical expenses
- I pay 70% of income to rent, rent went up \$90 dollars. Car expenses and repairs
- In NYC rent is controlled, but here it went up \$90. There was no warning or notice. Would be great if the county would help regulate rent increases. With only a 30 or 60 day warning to either pay the new rent or seek a new affordable housing place its not easy.
- electricity, water so showers are expensive. Electricity sometimes goes out
- most landlords charge for electricity and water. Might be good to have it bundled in the rent

Do you feel Safe and secure

- I feel very safe, I always see police presence
- My friend got chased by a bunch of guys in the neighborhood
- but I feel safe inside the house



- I feel safe in the neighborhood
- I feel safe, nothing in really goes on, its a quiet place
- I used to live in another neighborhood there were some shootings, but its safe in my neighborhood
- Im from Clarendon - and my boyfriend was nearly jumped. I manage safety by avoiding people and stay in lit areas

Time when you had to make ah choice between rent or healthcare

- yes, if I get a medical emergency I'll have a financial emergency
- One time I had to choose between rent and food. So I paid rent and didn't buy food
- Housing costs are high in Arlington, but it's not that much cheaper if you live in the suburbs because of transportation costs, plus in Arlington I can walk to work, and have access to many job and recreation opportunities
- It would be cool if neighborhood had block parties so that we could meet new people and make new friends
- I'm sad to see the small businesses getting pushed out

How easy was it to get housing. How is your landlords caring & maintenance?

- I had help finding housing. Permanent support housing via housing worker. It took me a week after applying to get a place. Finding housing did not have many challenges
- I have permanent support housing, Arlington did a good job. The application process went smoothly
- There are allot of requirements s to apply. I needed to wait until the apartment renovation was completed. I'm getting help to find housing from housing. Don't have a kid
- I have a federal grant, no help from county. I got lucky to find housing. It took 9 months. A couple places I called do not take housing vouchers. I didn't to get help from county. I was living in Fairfax, but moved to Arlington. When calling they have a procedure that limits the times I can call to once a month
- I'm on the federal program as well. I took a bit pay cut. Also need mental heath support. I'm part of a population that falls trough the cracks between federal and county housing support programs. I don't qualify for housing grant. I found apartment while walking and was lucky to find the apartment and I could afford it.
- It was easy to get into the shelter. There was no application process
- My parents challenge was finding housing within the school district



- Takes a lot of time and effort to get through the process

How are the voucher programs working?

- Need to educate the leasing companies. Most landlords are not nice when they encounter tenants with vouchers

- Need to talk to the tenants association to make sure they understand about some of their tenants. Also host some community meetings, social opportunities to help break ice between tenants with assistance and general population. In some cases there are people who live alone don't get out much so don't know about programs

- County should educate high-school kids on available programs

- Post housing info on public bulletin boards

- My family does not talk about the vouchers

Landlord:

- We don't like property manager. I feel unwelcome in the office. People avoid the office

— Wish staff was more polite. They are a bit condescending & young.

— Had a problem getting my rental renewal letter. There were delays in delivering it, was feeling brushed off each time I asked the office about when they'd get issued. When the county called they were prompt and responsive, but when I called they were not. The lack of responsiveness would have cut into apartment hunting time. Luckily the letter came.

- We live in a new building so maintenance not so much of an issue

Table 19

5:30 pm Dinner Served Family Style at Tables:

Please share where you live; something about your family (maybe how many children you have?); and if you are working? What you do for a living?

We were Table 19 sitting at the Spanish Teen Table.

- There are 6 teens (5 girls and 1 boy)
- They range from being Seniors, Juniors, sophomores and 2 freshmen
- They attend Wakefield and Washington Lee
- Majority of them live in the area around Columbia Pike.
- One teen lives at the Infinity apartments
- One teen lives in The Barcroft Apartments
- 3 teens lived in condos and they rent out by a private owner(landlord)
- The boy and his parents share a bedroom that they rent out from a family member's house.

- The teen that is a senior shared that she works on weekends as a host in Shirlington and is planning on attending Northern VA Community College when she graduates.

Are there any community organizations you are involved in (PTA, classes, other?) How did you first hear about Arlington? What attracted you to Arlington that made you want to move here?

N/A- We weren't able to touch base on these questions because the teens arrived late.

How long have you lived here? Rent or own? How did you find your first home here?

- one teen shared that they have been renting out the condo for about 10 years with her family.
- Another teen shared that they arrived at the US about 4 years ago and have been living in the Barcorft Apartments since they arrived here.
- Another teen shared that they use to rent out a basement at family's house and then problems started happening. That caused them to move out and find a unit on their own.

6:15 pm Guided Table Conversations 1.1: How well is your housing and neighborhood working for you and your family?

How is your current housing and neighborhood arrangement working for you? What are the things you just love about your neighborhood and community? What opportunities or challenges do you have in accessing services, transportation, and others?

- Someone shared that there is a shortage of bus stop for the Art Bus due to the construction on the Pike (She shared that they received a letter last year saying the bus stop got moved and it was temporary. They have not received any letter of it being changed and they believe it is going to be permanent now)
- She also shared that it is a bit frustrating because they have to walk longer to the other bus stop due to it being moved
- One teen shared that she does not feel safe because they don't have locks on the doors to get in the building and that anyone can walk in (Barcorft)
- She also shared that the lighting at night is very dim and someone was assaulted last year and is afraid to walk at night due to poor lighting in the community
- They shared they do not like the construction in Columbia Pike
- Getting dangerous due to the construction and causing a lot of traffic.
- One teen shared the playground that she grew up with they knocked it down to make a high rise building
- She shared that the community was upset because there is no place for the kids to go play or meet with their friends. She also shared that the building that they put blocks the sunlight. And they didn't consider asking the community or give a notice that they were going to knock it down
- One teen shared that they live in Oakland apartments and it feels a little safe. Playground on the property

- They stated the bus fee went up and is surprise it went up
- The teen that lives in the Barcorft shared that people drink alcohol outside the apartment buildings and are very loud and disruptive.
- She shared that dogs are not allowed in these properties, but residents still have dogs living in their unit. She shared that her family is afraid of complaining to the leasing office because they don't want the neighborhood to hate them.
- The teen that lives in the Infinity Apartments, feels that the building is safe and a quiet neighborhood
- One teen shared that they live in a 2-bedroom unit. Her and her sister sleep in a bedroom and the master bedroom is rented out by their uncle and her parents sleep in the living room. She shared that she isn't happy with her current living space because she doesn't really have a living room or a place to hang out because her parents live in the living room. She shared that she doesn't like to have company over due to no living room/ too many people living in the unit.
- The teens expressed that where they live if you would like a second parking spot you would have to pay.
- They stated that there is really no parking to have visitors.
- A girl shared that there is only street parking for vistor's and she lives on condos on the corner of Carlin Springs. One night a family member was over and left their car parked on the street overnight and it was in an accident due to a hit and run. She stated that there are a lot of accident on Carlin Springs when people park on the street.

6:40 pm Guided Table Conversations 1.2: What are some of the most important features or characteristics of a community that are important to you?

How is your space in and around your house working for you and your family? How does your current housing meet your family needs? What, if any needs are not being met? How safe and secure do you feel in your neighborhood? And around your home?

- A teen shared that she lives in Barcorft and sometimes there is cops patrolling the area and that should cause her to feel safe, but she still does not due to poor lighting.
- She also stated that the front door is not safe if someone kicks it they can unlock it due to the door lock being so old. She expressed how her family have asked the leasing office if they can change the door locks/ knobs and they said no, it must remain as is.
- They share how there is no parking. They believe that people share units and due to multiple adults being in the unit they take up parking spaces. They shared how it is not fair because no one gets towed from the property.
- One teen shared how her farther has a parking pass and he always gets off work late and by the time he is home there is no parking on the lot. She shared that her father has to park blocks away due to parking. They don't complain because they are afraid of getting trouble.
- A girl shared how her parents want to move away but don't because the school's system is good and resourceful and want a better future for the kids.
- A teen expressed how her parents don't let her complain due to the neighborhood/ community could hate them.
- There is no lock on the buildings anyone can walk in
- Lack of parking
- Lack of security in the building
- Streets are not safe. Sidewalks are narrow and not safe for kids when walking home from school.

- The laundry room is dirty
- Keeping the neighborhood clean

7:25 pm Guided Table Conversations 2.1: How easy or hard has it been to find Housing that is Affordable to you and your family?

How easy OR hard has it been to find housing that is affordable in Arlington? How is your relationship with your landlord, property manager, or other staff? What are some of the challenges that you are experiencing with your housing? Are there other things beyond affordability, that have been limiting? Makes it hard?

- Before living at apartment, they rented out a basement
- Most teens shared don't really know the property manager or have a relationship with them their parents interact with them
- They feel as though the Property management staff does not take them seriously
- Maintenances does not come and do repair (condo renter)
- The teens know their parents don't have section 8; they pay rent
- One teen shared that the maintenance men come in the unit without leaving a note that they were there or that they made repairs in the unit.
- Another teen shared that the maintenance men make a repair and they take their time. They don't make repairs in a timely matter.
- Or they come and make repairs and don't really do much because then the item that they requested to repair doesn't work within a couple days
- The teens shared if they don't keep the unit clean then they get rodents.
- On teen shares that she has spotted roaches and mice in the unit/building.
- She shared that they have asked property management staff to exterminate but don't because they don't want to get the people living in the unit there sick (barcorft resident)
- She shared that a 2 bedroom is \$1,500 at Barcorft
- Another teen shared that she is a family of 4 in a one bedroom at Infinity Apartments
- One teen shared that he and his parents share a one bedroom and lives in a house with other family members. His parents pays \$500 to rent a room
- Private own condo (lived there for over 10 years) the rent hasn't really increased.

8:00 pm SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION 2.2: What resources and/or information have you used (or would like to use?)

Is anyone familiar with resources available for getting assistance and/or addressing challenges? (eviction, rent, housing grants) How did you come to learn about living where you live now? And did you learn about your current housing opportunity? Were there organizations or people that helped you with your move? Do you feel like you would be able to move independently at some point? What types of supports have been/would be helpful for you to maintain your housing?

- One teen shared that her parents are permanent residents and they can't apply for grants due to them not being citizen. She shared that they have investigated it and saw that they would be getting a public charge
- The teens know that the parents currently don't have a housing grant or section 8
- Another teen shared that she is applying to be a citizen and that is pricey, and her parents are paying a lot of money for that.

We did not touch on a lot of over questions in this section due to the harvest and others sharing their stories.

Table: #20, Arabic Speaking Table

Facilitator & Host (FAC): Rasha Abulohom

Notetaker: Tania Bougebrayel

*****Dinner & Intro/Ground Rules*****

Guided Table Conversation 1.1: How well is your housing and neighborhood working for you and your family?

FAC: The topic for this section is how well is your housing and neighborhood working for you and your family. Does anyone have any thoughts?

- It is working well except for the yearly raises in rent. It's too much...maybe it can be a raise in rent every two or three (2-3) years instead of every year. We already pay too much and cannot afford it! This is supposed to be affordable housing.
- It's very, very difficult to find affordable housing and not easy at all to find options. Even if you find it, it won't match the housing grant you are allocated. The housing grant limit by the county is too low and plus, it's raising every year—it is too hard.

FAC: So, do you know about the raises and advances in rent cost in advance so you can prepare to find alternate housing, etc?

- No, you don't have much notice. Only sixty (60) days or so. You can stay or leave.

FAC: Do you have any resources you can contact to help you?

- No, you have to deal between the county and the owner of the apartment or condo.
- You will wait on a list forever.
- There needs to be more affordable housing built near schools.

FAC: Speaking of schools, are you happy with the schools in Arlington? Do you ever have to pick between schools and cost of living/rent money?

- I love the schools in Arlington—they are the best. We moved here from the schools.
- Alexandria is easier to get affordable housing and section 8 but we will not because the schools are so bad, 1 or 10 maybe. We don't want our kids near bad things and drugs....so we live in Arlington.
- Alexandria has great housing options—nicer, newer apartments but the schools are very, very bad. Arlington has old, bad apartments but the schools are very, very good.
- I love Barcroft!
- I didn't like Barcroft—when we lived there, there was a lot of mice and rats and rodents.
- Low income but it is still too, too high rent—you must make a minimum of 50K to qualify—too difficult!
- You can't make too much or too little or you will be kicked out of the program.
- Tough restrictions—must work 40 hrs. a week. My husband works in construction and if it snows or rains, he cannot work 40 hrs. a week. I cannot work because I am home with my 5 kids. There is no exception. Must have 40 hrs. per week of work or kicked out of program.

FAC: Do you like the area you live in?

- It is nice but I have a special needs child and my child is in a wheelchair. It is very hard for me to make the 50K a year and get the help I need for him. I need to have a special

ramp that can accommodate his wheelchair. It must be ADA accessible and the building must be too.

FAC: Do you have help with finding housing and your situation since your child has special needs?

- There are no exceptions to any rules. I must make 50K, I must be within the required amount needed.
- It is also very hard to find a place that will rent to you in Arlington without a cosigner.
- My family is six (6) and we live in a 2-bedroom, 1 bathroom in Arlington. We are on the waitlist for a three (3) bedroom but no luck now. We would rather stay in the 2 bedroom and have access to good schools than lose the 2 bedroom and have a hassle about finding something else.

FAC: How does the grant size work versus number of bedrooms needed? Do you get a larger grant if you have a family of six (6)?

- They don't care how many people you have. If you don't meet the requirements, they kick you out of the program.
- The inspector came and said my wife and my four (4) kids need to move into a 4-bedroom but there are none available. We finally found a house to move into but it was only \$100 more than the grant allowed but since it was over the amount, they didn't care and we couldn't get the house. There are no 4-bedrooms available with the grant amount we have! No exceptions!
- My son has equipment and his wheelchair since he's special needs. We need to have more space for his equipment, and it must be ADA accessible. However, there are no 4-bedrooms available!

FAC: Does everyone want you to leave?

- There is no easy way—it is take it or leave it!
- They don't like me because I am African. If I get a Hispanic person, they are nice to me when I am applying for grants and housing. If they are white, forget it. They see I am African and it becomes very difficult.
- That's true. Management doesn't like Africans or Arabs. They make it difficult for us.

*****HARVEST*****

Guided Table Conversation 1.2: What are some of the most important features or characteristics of a community that are important to you?

- There is a lot of traffic in my house—outside and in. Outside is cars and inside is the all of the six (6) people trying to use one bathroom!
- Yes, the number of bedrooms for people in a family doesn't matter...only the money matters!
- There are discriminatory practices by landlords when they see low income and vouchers. They won't take them.

FAC: When you do find something you like, is it near the schools? What happens if you move mid-school year?

- If you move from the area you are in, you are zoned to a different school. You don't have to move your child but you will lose transportation provided by the county (buses) so you will have to take the children yourself to school, but you won't have to switch schools if you move within county.
- Schools are very, very important to us. This is why we are here—for our kids to be in good schools. We will suffer with 6 people in a 2-bed, 1-bath for the good schools!

- I will not take my kids to Alexandria schools—so bad and too many drugs!

FAC: Ok, let's talk about some of the things you love about Arlington and where you live.

- Schools are great!
- We are all here for our kids. This is our hope—our kids in school here (American Dream).
- I've been in Arlington for 12 years and I want to stay her forever! I love it—I tell everyone come to Arlington!
- Arlington Hospital/VA Hospital is the best in the area—very good medical care!
- The parks are great—and the swimming and the things to do for kids.
- I am a mom in Evening Star and this program is amazing. It is an all-encompassing program that helps parents in Arlington and finds activities for kids.
- I will stay in an old apartment with very little space and small bathroom for the schools and programs.
- Family—family is the reason we came to US and stay in Arlington.
- I am also in Evening Star and it helps parents with childcare.
- The Montessori program is also good—they take children at the age of 3, not 4 like the other counties.

FAC: What is available near you?

- I live in a building that is wheelchair accessible but not ADA combined accessible. I have a child who can't use a normal ramp. He has brittle bones and needs certain specifications. I had to get an advocate to help me. The bus will NOT stop on Carlin Springs and North Thomas Street, but this is the ONLY place where I can get my child onto a ramp that is ADA combined accessible. I think they need to not allow parking/cars in that area during pick up and drop off time otherwise my child is at risk.

FAC: Can you move?

- I thought about it but it's too hard to move and I must have the ADA accessible ramp for my son. I cannot go back to an area where I have to carry his wheelchair up the stairs. Only an advocate has been able to help me. No one else listened.

FAC: Let's talk about parks! Do you live near any? Can you walk to one?

- We love the parks. I take my kids to parks all the time.
- I take the ART bus in front of my building. It is great and I love it!
- I feel safe in my area and can walk anywhere.
- When Lubber Run closed, this was hard. We loved when it opened because our kids loved it. Now it's closed for repairs and the kids don't have anywhere to go.

FAC: Do you every have to make the choice between rent or healthcare/medical services?

- No problems with medical services. We are covered. The most important thing is that the rent isn't covered.
- We've moved more than four (4) times!

FAC: So when you move (within Arlington), you don't have to change schools mid-year, right?

- That is correct but you lose transportation services.

FAC: What about parking near your home?

- There is parking on the street.
- I have a problem with parking. I have to pay \$35/month for parking and I can only park one car. My husband and I can share one car but not have two.



FAC: When your husband is at work, do you feel comfortable to commute on your own?

- It is very easy for me. I use the ART bus in front of my building and I take my kids to story time at the Central Library!

*****HARVEST*****

Guided Table Conversations 2.1: How easy or hard has it been to find Housing that is affordable to you and your family?

FAC: What is the application process like for affordable housing in Arlington?

- The process is not easy at all. There is a lot of paperwork involved and there is much back and forth. It's so confusing!

FAC: How long is the process—how long does it take?

- The waiting list for Section 8 in Arlington is 7 years!
- Section 8 in Alexandria is a lot easier to get into but my family refused to go there. The schools in Alexandria are very bad.
- The last time Section 8 opened in Arlington was 2012.

FAC: Does anyone get help with the application or know where to go to get help?

- You just put your name on a list and wait.

FAC: What happens if there is an error in the application?

- You have to bring everything with you or you're disqualified. You must have everything and sometimes they don't take everything but sometimes they do and if you don't have all your paperwork, you are out of the program.
- I heard of a low-income rent to own program. Does this exist in Arlington County? If so, I would like to use it. My friend does rent to own in Crystal City. She pays \$1000 or so a month and the voucher goes towards her mortgage every month but she cannot sell her home for 30 years but this is okay because she owns her own home!
- I don't know of this program—can we find out more?
- Can we get help with paying the electrical bill?

*****FAC and Notetaker put up Housing Support card and ask for assistance regarding rent to own program and are giving the contact info for the housing info session on 30 March at Washington and Lee.*****

FAC: Are there any help centers you know of?

- I've gone to Arlington Mill before and it's great. They help you if they can.

FAC: How is your relationship with your landlord/management company?

- We do NOT cause problems because we don't want him to kick us out so we do the work ourselves. There were some cracks in the basement so my husband fixed it so we could lay low and not bother the landlord.

*****Major Themes of Discussion*****

1. Rent is too high
2. Accessibility to available and affordable units
3. Discrimination within the system
4. Schools most important & American Dream



**COMMUNITY
PROGRESS
NETWORK**

PROMOTING
EQUITY THROUGH
EDUCATION,
ENGAGEMENT
AND ADVOCACY



5. The struggle to get into better housing is not worth it—it's easier to lay low, avoid trouble and have good schools.

*****LARGE HARVEST*****

*****Resources available, thank you, closing, and gift card/evaluation period*****