The Labor Landscape is Challenging for ALICE Workers

A small portion of adults (16 years and older) in Alexandria City, Virginia, are ALICE workers — households that earn more than the Federal Poverty Level, but less than the basic cost of living for the county. While conditions have improved for some households, many continue to struggle, especially as wages fail to keep pace with the rising cost of household essentials (housing, child care, food, transportation, health care, and taxes). It does not include savings for emergencies or college or retirement. In 2021, household costs in every county in Virginia were well above the Federal Poverty Level of $12,880 for a single adult and $26,500 for a family of four. The Household Survival Budget reflects the minimum cost to live and work in the modern economy and includes housing, child care, food, transportation, health care, a smartphone plan, and taxes. It does not include savings for emergencies or college or retirement. In 2021, household costs in every county in Virginia were well above the Federal Poverty Level of $12,880 for a single adult and $26,500 for a family of four. In 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic brought employment shifts, health struggles, and school/business closures. In 2021, it also spurred unprecedented public assistance through pandemic relief measures. In 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic brought employment shifts, health struggles, and school/business closures. In 2021, it also spurred unprecedented public assistance through pandemic relief measures.

There were also differences in financial hardship by household type and age of householder. By total number, groups with the largest population of households below the ALICE Threshold tend to also be in the largest demographic groups. However, when looking at the proportion of each group that is below the ALICE Threshold, it is clear that some groups are more likely to be ALICE than others. The Labor Landscape is Challenging for ALICE Workers

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The Cost of Living in Alexandria City

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Households by Race/Ethnicity, Alexandria City, Virginia, 2021

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