



# 2025

CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILY COLLABORATIVE COMMISSION  
**CHILDREN AND YOUTH MASTER PLAN**





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# CHILDREN AND YOUTH MASTER PLAN 2025

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# Executive Summary

Alexandria's Children and Youth Master Plan (CYMP) is a roadmap for how our community will work together to create the conditions for all young people to thrive in Alexandria. Updated every five years, the CYMP 2025 builds upon the original Plan's foundation and progress while updating it for the future. This was accomplished through a collaborative effort whereby 2,100 community members, 88% of whom were youth, were engaged in an hour-long workshop designed to craft a vision of where we want to go and how we are going to get there. The workshop was called, "Build Your Legacy Workshop" because the youth involved in developing the workshop believed that this was their opportunity to leave their legacy in Alexandria. The result is a plan that centers equity while preventing harmful experiences and promoting positive ones.

## HISTORY

In 2014, the Children, Youth, and Families Collaborative Commission (CYFCC) submitted to City Council and the Alexandria School Board the first ever, comprehensive, Children and Youth Master Plan (CYMP), a blueprint to improve outcomes for the children who call Alexandria their home. The 2014 CYMP included a vision statement that read, "All of Alexandria's children and youth can thrive today and tomorrow" and five cradle-to-career goals. In 2019, the Commission released a Five-Year Report on the first five years of the CYMP. The Report highlights our community's contributions to improving children's outcomes. It also focused our attention on the racial, economic, and social disparities that continue to persist, showing us where there is clearly more work to be done.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The "Legacy" events and other community outreach efforts yielded important data that set the course for the current plan. Input from those who would be most impacted by the plan was then coded, synthesized into strategic statements, and organized into thematic

areas. Next, youth-related strategies from other city-wide plans were reviewed for alignment and integrated into the CYMP, making this a plan of plans. The rest of the CYMP was developed by dozens of community stakeholders, including a team of middle school students, who came together to build action plans that support each strategy.

## INNOVATIONS OF CYMP 2025

Strategies for CYMP 2025 were assessed by the CYFCC, middle school students, and key stakeholders to meet specific criteria:

- Community Impact – the strategy must make the biggest impact on the lives of youth
- Feasibility – there must be enough resources and capacity to implement the strategy right now
- Community Values – the strategy must be consistent with our community values, meaning it must be equitable, trauma-informed, and build assets

The result of this effort maintains the original vision from 2014 – that all Alexandria's children and youth thrive today and tomorrow. However, the 2025 version reflects today's views on effectively arriving at that vision. These are:

1. All children, youth, and families are physically safe and healthy
2. All children and youth are academically successful and career ready
3. All children, youth, and families have positive experiences

Within each of these goals are strategies for mitigating the harmful effects of traumatic events such as abuse and neglect, parental mental illness, substance use, divorce, incarceration, and intimate partner violence – also known as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) – and for building The 40 Developmental Assets® which are positive supports, relationships, and strengths that all young people need to succeed. In short, this Plan is all about decreasing ACEs and increasing assets. 🌱





# Overview

The City of Alexandria, Alexandria City Public Schools, and youth-serving organizations will work together to promote equitable access to the resources needed for all children to be healthy, safe, and academically successful. Our community is stronger when all young people can realize their potential. 🌱

We will ensure that all children, youth and families are physically safe and healthy

**Start Healthy and Connected**  
Create the conditions for children to have a strong start in life and support economic stability among families.

Increase participation in early childhood education and care

Promote health, wellness, and wellbeing

Prevent risk-taking behaviors

Connect families to transportation, housing, financial, employment and technology resources

Preserve our natural environment

We will ensure that children are academically successful and career ready

**Support Academic Success and College and Career Readiness.**  
Advance educational equity and prepare youth for post-secondary success.

Foster supportive learning environments

Light pathways to college and careers

We will ensure that children, youth and families have positive experiences

**Decrease ACES, Increase Assets.**  
Build safe, stable, and nurturing environments and relationships.

Minimize exposure to adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and childhood trauma

Create trauma-informed and resilient communities

Build Developmental Assets®

To be successful in each of the CYMP Goal Areas, our systems must be coordinated and equitable

Systematically address racism and advance equity

Build capacity to expand resources and workforce resilience

Mobilize funding for positive experiences

Improve data collection and sharing

Strengthen collaboration and communication to build resilience

**The Children and Youth Master Plan 2025 was developed using three lenses:  
Racial Equity, Trauma-Informed and Developmental Assets®**



# Letter from the Chair

Decades from now, people will remember 2020 for its health crisis, economic crisis, and social and political upheaval. From the global pandemic, to the Black Lives Matter movement around the world, to the election in the United States, 2020 will leave an imprint on our collective memories.

The Children, Youth, and Families Collaborative Commission (CYFCC, the Commission) will remember 2020 for so much more. We will remember it for the youth and community members who developed the CYMP 2025 and for the leaders who stepped up to make Alexandria the best place for children to grow up. Efforts to build this Plan took place in classrooms, in churches, in cafeterias, in recreation and community centers, and eventually, in peoples' homes. No matter where planning took place, our efforts to create the conditions for all youth to thrive have left their own deep mark on Alexandria.

Alexandria's CYMP 2025 shines a light on many of the efforts taking place across the city to improve children's outcomes. Throughout this Plan, you'll see connections to other city-wide plans. As these plans make clear, youth-service providers are fighting for the health, education, financial stability, and positive experiences of every child and family in Alexandria.

The CYFCC believes that health, education financial stability, and positive experiences of children and families are the building blocks of stronger communities. When a child is safe, healthy, and supported, they can thrive academically. When a student receives a good education, they get a job that provides for them and their family. Our community-based approach would be impossible without the support and guidance of our Mayor and City Council, City Manager's Office, city and nonprofit partners, community members, volunteers, and

most importantly, youth. This Plan is stronger because of your insights. Deeply rooted problems require the time and talents of a diverse group of individuals and organizations, and we are incredibly grateful for your support.

Your support is critical in a time of turbulence. The CYFCC believes that maximizing partnerships and mobilizing resources to develop sustainable and equitable solutions is more valuable than ever. Caring adults, youth service providers, and decision makers are encouraged to look to this Plan for guidance on how to support Alexandria's youngest members and move the needle on their outcomes. This Plan has the power to bring people together to build coalitions and effect positive change.

The Commission is eager for the challenge. We know that complex problems require complex solutions, and system-level changes don't happen alone. Just as it takes a village to raise a child, it will take a village to implement this Plan. To everyone who helped build this Plan, thank you for weathering the storms of 2020 to see it through. With your help, this Plan will create lasting change that impacts the lives of children, youth, and families, makes Alexandria a better place for young people to grow up.

We hope that all who read this Plan are inspired to build developmental relationships and let youth know they are valued, respected, and loved. 🌱

Thank you,

*The Children, Youth, and Families Collaborative Commission*

*Kelley Organek, Chair*



# Data Profile

This Data Profile, a comprehensive statistical snapshot that undergirds the Plan, tells the unique story about Alexandria’s children and youth. The majority of these data come from public records, including the 2010 U.S. Census, City of Alexandria departments, the Virginia Department of Health, the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), the Alexandria Resident Survey, the Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) Scorecard, and the Search Institute’s Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors.

## BACKGROUND DEMOGRAPHICS

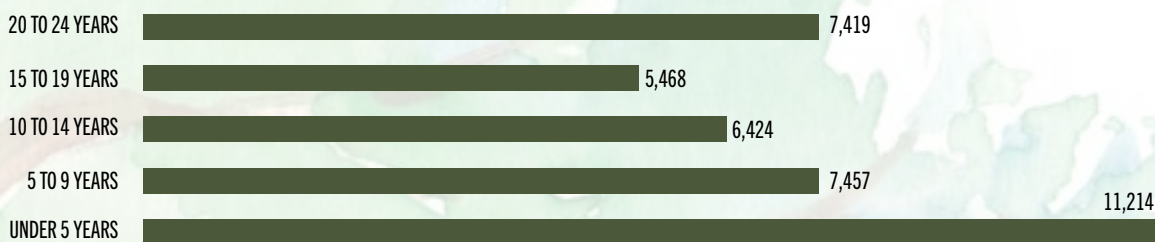
In 2019, the total population of Alexandria was 159,428, and nearly a quarter of Alexandria’s population was under 25 years old. Of the population under 25, half of youths are younger than 10.

## GOAL 1: ALL CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES WILL BE PHYSICALLY SAFE & HEALTHY

Safety and health are at the heart of a successful life for any child. A healthy life starts in the womb, and conditions surrounding the mother can have a lasting impact on the life of her newborn. Safety and health must be nurtured in early childhood so that children can flourish as young adults. The following indicators are used to see how well Alexandria is doing in this area:

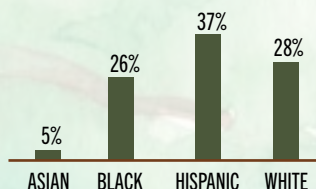
- Early Childhood (i.e. Prenatal Care, Infant Mortality, and Kindergarten Readiness)
- Health and Wellness (i.e. Medical Home and Maintains Good Health)

### RESIDENTS BY AGE GROUP

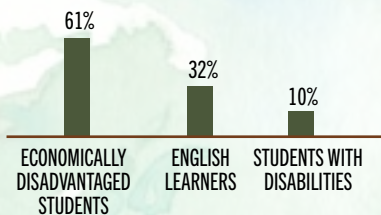


SOURCE: 2019 AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY (ACS)

### 2019 ACPS STUDENT ENROLLMENT BY RACE & ETHNICITY



### ACPS STUDENT ENROLLMENT BY SUB-GROUP



SOURCE: VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, 2018-2019

- Risk Taking Behaviors (i.e. Substance Use, Teen Pregnancy, Mental Health, and Safety)
- Family Resources (i.e. Transportation, Cost-Burdens, Childhood Poverty Rate)
- Natural Resources (i.e. Open Space, Tree Canopy, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Waste)

**KEY FINDINGS**

- **Trends in Early Childhood:** About three-fourths of students enter kindergarten with Pre-K experiences (2019) and about four in five kindergarten students met benchmarks in self-regulation and social skills (2019). Large gaps remain between White Kindergarten students (92%) and Hispanic Kindergarten students (63%) who meet PALS benchmarks (2018). It is evident that the rate of infant deaths from Black mothers is disproportionately high compared to Alexandria’s rate for all mothers. The 2018 rate for African American babies, 7.9, is almost triple the rate for White babies, 2.8.
- **Trends in Health and Wellness:** Four out of five youth have a medical home (2016) and approximately 94% of children have had health insurance since 2011. Over half of youth report paying attention to healthy nutrition and exercise (2019).
- **Trends in Risk Taking Behaviors and Patterns (2019):** More than one third of females (36%) and one in five males report feeling frequently depressed or has attempted suicide. Nearly a quarter of youth report having sexual intercourse one or more times. The use of all substances, except e-cigarettes, has decreased among students since 2013. While the rate of teen pregnancies has decreased by 77% in last decade, racial disparities remain among Black and Hispanic females. Twelve gang-motivated incidents occurred in Alexandria (2018). One in five youth report engaging in violence in the last year. More males (27%) engage in violent behavior than females (16%).
- **Trends in Family Resources:** Two out of five commuters use alternative transportation options (2019). Forty-three percent of renters living in Alexandria spend 30% or more of their income on rent (2018). One in five children live in poverty (2018) and nearly half (47%) of ACPS students are eligible for free and reduced lunch program (2018-2019).

- **Trends in Natural Resources:** Over a third of Alexandria’s land is covered by tree canopy and the City has planted about 800 trees per year over the last several years (2016). The City also exceeded the 2009 goal of acquiring 100 new acres of open space and maintained a ratio of 7.3 acres of open space per 1,000 residents. Half of Alexandrians’ waste was diverted through recycling, reuse, and composting (2017). Greenhouse Gas Emissions per capita have reduced by 22% over the last decade.

**GOAL 2: EVERY CHILD WILL BE ACADEMICALLY SUCCESSFUL AND CAREER READY**

Alexandria has a commitment to ensuring that all students succeed in school, and a commitment towards promoting career and workforce development for all youth. Educational equity and future career success are defined by following indicators:

- Educational Equity (i.e. School Engagement, Caring School Climate, Reading and Math Proficiency, Discipline, and Truancy)
- College and Career Readiness (i.e. On-Time Graduation, and Drop Out)

**KEY FINDINGS**

- **Trends in School Engagement:** Four out of five ACPS students report active engagement in their learning, a dramatic increase of 50% between 2016 and 2019.
- **Trends in Caring School Climate:** Over a third of youth report that their school provides a caring, encouraging environment.
- **Trends in Reading and Math:** On average, 62% of students met benchmarks in 3rd grade reading (2019) and 70% of students met benchmarks in math (2019). While White students have consistently met the ACPS target of 81% proficiency in 3rd grade reading, none of the other student groups have met the target since 2016.
- **Trends in Suspension Rates:** Between 2016 and 2019, the number of suspensions that occur at elementary schools increased by 35.8%. The number of suspensions that occur at middle schools and high schools decreased by 19.32% and by 4.8%, respectively. There are multiple instances of dispro-

portionality in suspensions at ACPS. For example, while Black males comprise 14% of all ACPS student enrollment, they comprise 32% of suspensions (2018).

- **Trends in Truancy:** High school students have the highest rate of chronic absenteeism (11% in 2018-19), followed by elementary school students (8% in 2018-19). About half of all students that are chronically absent are Hispanic (52%) and nearly half are English Learners (47%) (2018).
- **Trends in Graduation Rates:** Four out of five ACPS students graduate on-time, with 10% of students dropping out before graduating. White and Asian students have consistently high graduation rates, and the graduation rate among Black students has steadily increased, meeting the target of 90% since 2017. Students with disabilities exceeded the target in 2019. While the gap in graduation rates between White and Black students narrowed over recent years, the gaps in graduation rates between White and Hispanic and English Learner students' have widened.
- **Trends in Drop Out Rates:** All subgroups, except for Asian students, saw declining drop-out rates between 2015 and 2019; Black and White students had a dropout rate of less than 1% in 2019. Hispanic and English Learner students continue to have the highest dropout rates, though 2019 marks the lowest in five years for both groups.

### GOAL 3: EVERY YOUNG PERSON AND THEIR FAMILY WILL HAVE POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

Early experiences in life matter. Trauma and adversity early in life can lead to lifelong negative health outcomes in adults, such as poor mental health, substance abuse, and violence. Positive childhood experiences, on the other hand, support child development and enable them to grow up healthy, caring and responsible. To track youth development in this goal area, the following indicators are measured:

- Exposure to Childhood Trauma (i.e. Child Welfare, Adult Mental Health, and Violence)
- Developmental Assets® (i.e. Ideal Number of Assets, Support to Youth, and Youth Empowerment)

### KEY FINDINGS

- **Trends in Exposure to Childhood Trauma:** On average, there are 100 children in Foster Care per month (2019). Despite only comprising 26% of the population, Latino children make up 41% of the children placed in Foster Care. One in five adults report that their mental health was not good in the past month (2018). Less than half of youth report feeling safe with significantly more males (58%) feeling safer than females (38%). One in five youth surveyed were a victim of violence, with 8th graders reporting the highest rates (2019). More middle school students (25%) than high school students (13%) report being bullied on school property (2016).
- **Trends in Developmental Assets® (2019):** Only eight percent of youth surveyed have the ideal number of assets. Half of youth spend three or more hours per week in youth programming. Only one in five youth feel valued by adults in the community. A quarter of youth are given useful roles in the community. Less than half (39%) of the surveyed students volunteer one or more hours per week. Two out of five youth receive support from non-parent adults. 🌱



Early experiences  
in life matter.



**CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

**20**

**All Alexandria's Children and Youth**



A photograph of two young girls hugging outdoors. The girl on the left has short, dark, curly hair and is wearing a green shirt. The girl on the right has long, dark, curly hair and is wearing a pink and white striped shirt. They are both wearing blue jeans. The background is a soft-focus green field.

**YOUTH MASTER PLAN**

**25**

**Let Youth Thrive Today and Tomorrow**

# Introduction

## BACKGROUND

The Children and Youth Master Plan (CYMP) 2025 was developed amid the stressors of a global pandemic and ongoing civil unrest due to systemic racism in the United States. Long-standing inequities were made worse in the face of a life-threatening virus, social distancing, grief, shutdowns, school closings, and economic uncertainty. These disruptions and traumatic events upended the sense of stability for many families and have only exacerbated pre-existing inequities that will continue to create negative outcomes for communities lacking access to supports and safety nets.

Without healthy ways of coping with this amount of stress over a long period of time, households are more likely to experience intimate partner violence, substance abuse, mental health problems, divorce, and child maltreatment – also known as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). If left untreated, these ACEs can have lasting effects on a child’s health, behavior, and potential. No matter how old the child was at the time of exposure, ACEs have the potential to disrupt healthy brain development, compromise immune systems, and can lead to unhealthy coping behaviors later in life.

According to the 2016-17 Virginia Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), over half of northern Virginian adults reported at least one ACE; one in four adults reported three or more ACEs. The most reported ACE among northern Virginians was emotional abuse (58%), followed by divorce/ separation (42%). Among

Northern Virginia adults reporting they have experienced depression, ACEs are a risk factor in 45% of those cases.

The Pair of ACEs tree, created by Wendy Ellis at the George Washington University Milken Institute School of Public Health, paints a picture of adversity at both the family and community level. Ellis describes the tree as having been “planted in soil steeped in systemic inequities, robbing it of nutrients necessary to support a thriving community. If adverse community environments are the roots of inequity and adverse childhood experiences are the fruit of the tree, inequitable policies are the elements in soil that rob the community of vital nutrients, sustaining inequity. Asking, ‘What’s in your soil?’ gets to root causes of trauma and despair.”

The good news is that ACEs can be prevented because ACEs have an antidote – Developmental Assets®. The Search Institute defines Developmental Assets® as the 40 positive supports, relationships, and strengths that young people need to succeed. The more assets that young people have, the less likely they are to engage in a wide range of high-risk behaviors and the more likely they are to thrive. Only 8% of Alexandria youth report having the ideal number of Assets (31-40 Assets).

This CYMP aims to improve the soil by recommending effective strategies that target the root causes of trauma at the family and community level. We will replenish our soil with healthy nutrients by centering equity, strengthening families, promoting community resilience, empowering youth, and building Developmental Assets®. To create the conditions in Alexandria for all children and youth to thrive today and tomorrow, the City, Alexandria City Public Schools, and youth organizations will work together to maximize our efforts on equipping caring adults with the tools, supports, and skills they need to build strong, positive relationships with young people and create schools, programs, communities, and homes where they can thrive.

## METHODOLOGY

Over 2,100 of Alexandria’s youth, caring adults, and youth-serving organizations were engaged in one-hour “Build Your Legacy” workshops. In total, 89 workshops were delivered across the city; they took place at board



## DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS

### Support

Young people are surrounded by people who love, care for, appreciate and accept them

### Empowerment

Youth feel valued, valuable, safe and respected in their community

### Constructive Use of Time

Youth have opportunities outside of school to learn and develop new skills and interests with other youth and adults

### Boundaries & Expectations

Young people are given clear and consistent rules and encouragement to do their best

## COMMUNITY ASSETS

### Connected Systems & Supports

### College & Career Pathways

### Shared Humanity

### Education Equity

### Health Care

### Public Safety

### Trauma-Informed & Resilient Communities

### Economic Mobility & Opportunities

### Affordable & Safe Housing

### High Quality Early Childhood Education & Care

meetings, all-staff meetings, and in classrooms. Staff and students from over 50 nonprofits, schools, task forces, and City programs participated in the making of this Plan.

No matter where the workshop took place, participants were given a data profile of how children and youth are faring today (see pages 7-9), and asked to envision Alexandria five years from now after the Youth Master Plan was implemented – what improvements or “Victories!” would they like to see in their community? They were given permission to dream and design their future, and this Plan reflects those dreams. They were then asked to brainstorm solutions for how to make those dreams a reality.

## DREAMS FOR OUR FUTURE

The Alexandria community dreams of a future where “youth feel heard,” “important,” “empowered and safe to speak up,” “valued,” “loved,” and “respected”; a future where “100% of youth have caring adults in their life” and “youth have a support system outside of family.” Within a few years from now, “Children feel less stressed” and have “healthy coping mechanisms for dealing with stress.” Alexandria embraces a “Culture that values mental health and a need for breaks” so that young people feel “happy,” “more peaceful and calmer,” “well rested,” and “able to focus.”

In our future, students are “Provided greater opportunities to succeed,” and have “diverse and supportive pathways to academic success.” Alexandria’s “students are supported academically” in and out of school, especially the “kids who don’t have academic support at home.” We will also see an “Increase in academic success among Latinx students,” and “greater opportunities to go to college for immigrants.”

In 2025, Alexandria is a place where “Everyone is safe,” and is a “More accepting community of LGBT people.” “Families are supported with community and natural supports and build a level of resiliency.” “Children grow up in stable and healthy homes,” and “families stay together.” Families know where to meet their needs.” “Alexandria becomes a “model community for prevention programming.”

Finally, young people and caring adults would like to see Alexandria “Eliminate gaps and racial disparities.” “Factors like race, sexual orientation, and zip code don’t determine outcomes.” Instead, “All children have equitable access to resources and opportunities.” Alexandria will “Create a culture that values all Alexandrians as assets to the community – no one is a stranger or a burden.”

**GOALS OF THE PLAN**

These ideas and thousands more were turned into actions which you will see laid out in this Plan under three goals:

1. All children, youth, and families are physically safe and healthy
2. All children and youth are academically successful and career ready
3. All children, youth, and families have positive experiences

The Plan contains 10 thematic areas that the City is focused on– everything from early childhood education and care to youth mental health. Although these themes are housed in separate goal areas, they are intertwined and impact one another.

**PLAN OF PLANS**

It’s important to note that this Plan ties together many of the strategic plans set forth by Alexandria’s youth-serving community. The figure below illustrates which city-wide plans are woven throughout the CYMP.

**A PLAN OF PLANS | HOW THE WORK GETS DONE**



It also demonstrates how youth-serving providers will be working together differently to realize these “Victories!” over the next five years. Together we can change the conditions of our community’s soil so that our trees bear Assets and not ACEs.

Accompanying this Plan is an extensive Appendices which contain:

- Quantitative data that indicates progress in each area while highlighting social and racial disparities
- Action Plans for each of the Plan’s Strategies
- Summary of community outreach and engagement efforts

This Plan is considered a living document and the actions it prescribes are a starting place; solutions will continue to evolve to meet the needs of Alexandria’s young people as data and resources are made available.

## UNIFIED PLANNING PROCESS

Alexandria prides itself on being a concerned, caring and engaged community – one which works collaboratively for the benefit of those who live here and the larger public interests. Alexandrians view themselves individually but also, as part of this larger collective wishing to improve the lives of all who live in the city.

In 2019, the “perfect storm” of opportunity presented itself when the timing of revisions to three major city-related plans coincided – the Alexandria City Public Schools’ (ACPS) Strategic Plan, the Department of Community and Human Services’ (DCHS) Children and Youth Master Plan (CYMP), and the Alexandria Health Department and the Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria’s Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). These organizations established a Unified Planning Team in the spring of 2019 and found partnering to develop their plans collectively provided added value to each through the opportunity to maximize collective community engagement, use and focus on the most important data, and focus on shared outcomes.

The result of working together, instead of in isolation, should prove beneficial to all in Alexandria and serve as a model for future efforts in our community. We invite you to view the outcome of this unified planning work in this document and the others completed as part of this collaborative effort.

While developing these plans is important, implementing them successfully is even more important. As a result, the Unified Planning Team will evolve into a Unified Implementation Team to continue the partnership during implementation of these plans over the next five years and continue to ensure alignment of actions, collective community engagement, use of data, and sharing of resources, when possible.


## ACCOUNTABILITY

Each Strategy in this Plan is connected to an Action Plan. Action Plans (see Appendix 1) are what guide the work, keep implementation on track, and maintain accountability. Action Plans include tactics (how), a timeline for implementation (when), performance measurements (why), and Tactic Owners (who). Tactic Owners report their progress to their Strategy’s Champion – a specific person or entity – responsible for coordinating the Plan’s implementation and communicating progress to the Children and Youth Master Plan Coordinator. CYMP Coordinator then reports that progress to the CYFCC, who in turn, reports progress to the City Council and general public.

To track progress and measure performance, the Plan will use the Results-Based Accountability™ (RBA) framework. Tactic Owners will report their progress using the RBA framework to quantify what’s being done, how well it was done, and if anyone is better off because it.

The Plan’s intent is that each Strategy be fully implemented within five years of the Plan’s adoption. The CYFCC will have an important ongoing role in monitoring and publicizing implementation of the Plan. Ultimately, however, the results will rely on the active, coordinated leadership of the people and institutions providing services to children, youth and families in Alexandria. Their efforts need to be fully supported by the entire community.

## DATA SOURCES

To track success improving population-level outcomes, the data come from public records, including the 2010 U.S. Census, the Virginia Department of Health, the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), the Alexandria Resident Survey, the ACPS Scorecard, and the Search Institute’s Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors. To measure our performance and progress implementing actions, the data will come from program providers across the city. 

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# Goal 1: All Children, Youth, and Families will be Physically Safe and Healthy

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## **OUTCOME OBJECTIVE: START HEALTHY AND CONNECTED**

Our health is, in part, determined by the conditions in which we live. Our access to adequate housing, transportation options, educational and economic opportunities, recreational activities, social supports, resources that help us meet our daily needs, exposure to crime and violence, and the cleanliness of our water, food, and air – also known as the social determinants of health – help explain why some people are healthier than others. Even before COVID-19 created an economic crisis, many families in Alexandria were already facing financial hardship. One in five children in Alexandria live below the poverty line (American Community Survey, 2019). More than half (58%) of ACPS students are eligible for free and reduced-price meals. In some ACPS schools, almost 90% of students are eligible.

Families living on low incomes have fewer resources to invest in their children. The stress endured from financial instability can negatively affect mental health and child brain development. Connecting families to resources that improve their ability to meet their child's basic needs decreases parental stress, prevents ACEs, and

gives children a healthy start in life. That is why this Plan encourages enrollment in early childhood education and care; promotes health and wellness; prevents risky behaviors; connects families, including immigrant families, to resources that help them meet their daily needs; and preserves Alexandria's natural environment.

### **QUALITATIVE DATA:**

Behavioral, mental, and physical health were mentioned over 400 times during the "Legacy" workshops, making this the most mentioned theme overall. Within this theme, enhancing food quality, improving youth mental health, and preventing substance abuse, namely the use of e-cigarettes, were the most mentioned subthemes. Youth, mostly middle schoolers, would like everyone to have access to affordable, healthy, culturally appropriate food, including in school settings. Many workshop participants expressed wanting to increase access to recreational activities, sports, parks, playgrounds, etc. so that all young people are physically healthy and active. Increasing access to high-quality, culturally appropriate healthcare for everyone, including immigrants, is also a dream that workshop participants shared.

The CYMP was intentionally designed to help all Alexandrians see themselves in this Plan. Throughout the pages of this Plan, you will see an image of a green leaf next to tips for building developmental assets among our young people. So even if you don't work for a youth serving agency, a school, sit on a work group, or even have kids of your own, this Plan is filled with actions that anyone can take to help make Alexandria the best place for kids to grow up. These tips for building assets come from the Search Institute.



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**Help youth thrive: Volunteer to be a mentor for a young person**

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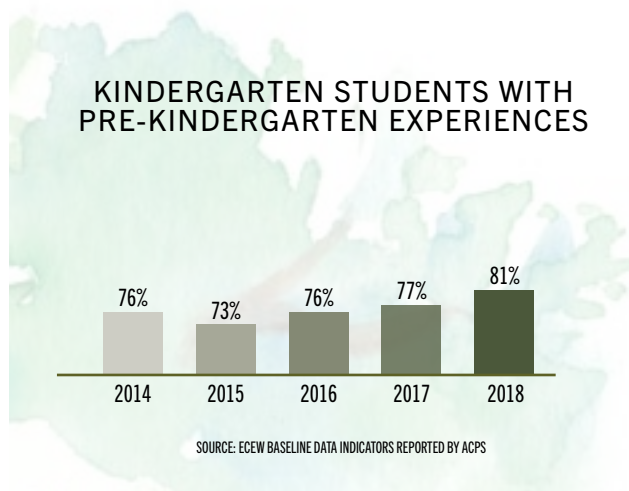
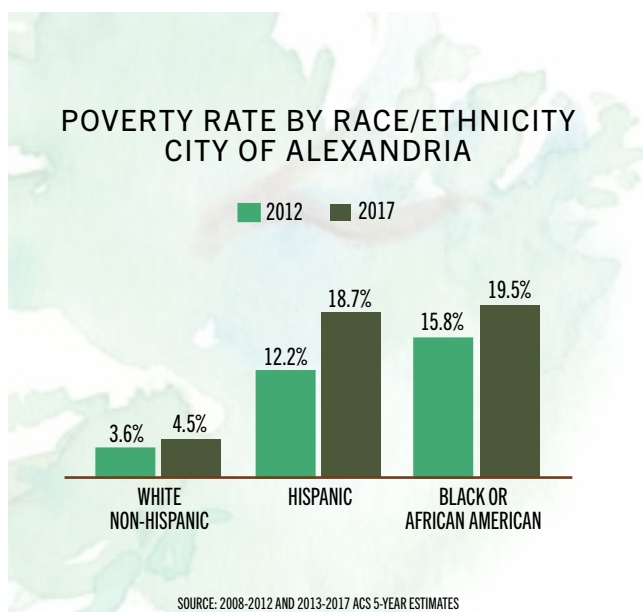
### FUTURE VICTORIES!

- “Families have more money”
- “Families feel connected”
- “Basic needs met for youth and families” and “people get the resources they need.”
- “Alexandria is a more affordable place to live, especially for low-income families”
- “All youth feel safe at home or have a safe place to go”
- “100% of children and youth are insured in five years”
- “100% free childcare”

## STRATEGIES FOR INCREASING PARTICIPATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

### ACTIONS FOR EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

1. **Foster a coordinated system of equitable access, capacity, enrollment, and funding**
  - **Action a:** Complete a preschool space audit for program continuity and/or expansion opportunities
  - **Action b:** Create an annual preschool delivery strategy and optimize funding streams supporting it



- **Action c:** Continue to refine enrollment processes to enable families to have a more transparent understanding of their eligibility for various programs
  - **Action d:** Develop a coordinated enrollment process with one point of entry
  - **Supporting Document:** Smart Beginnings Alexandria Common Agenda
2. **Establish meaningful partnerships and channels of information sharing with families to support families as their child’s first teacher**
  - **Action a:** Develop stronger feedback mechanisms for families to engage with providers in a culturally and geographically accessible way
  - **Action b:** Ensure stronger transitions between pre-K and grades K-3, with greater information sharing across early learning pathways
  - **Action c:** Implement the Basics Awareness Campaign
  - **Action d:** Forge connections among health and education providers, particularly in the prenatal to 3-year-old space, in order to identify specific ways Smart Beginnings Alexandria (SBA) can support comprehensive prenatal care, a comprehensive medical home approach, and more referral conduits between health-focused and other programs
  - **Action e:** Promote parent and family engagement in education around child development by supporting efforts of City and non-profit partners to establish universal developmental screening

for families who have children birth to age 5 years of age

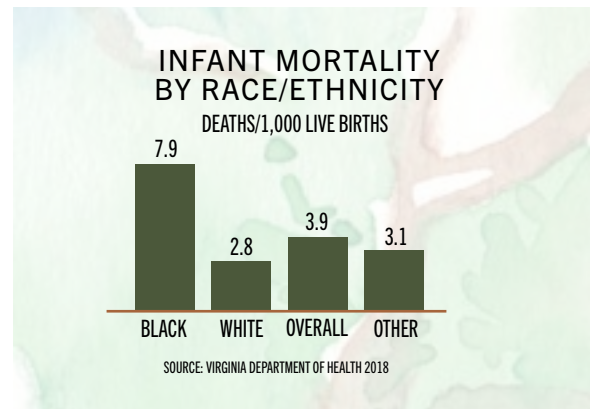
- **Supporting Document:** Smart Beginnings Alexandria Common Agenda

**3. Develop and coordinate professional learning opportunities for all early care and education providers to ensure equitable high-quality, culturally responsive learning experiences for young children**

- **Action a:** Increase the number of childcare centers, preschools, and family childcare homes that are accredited, maintaining accreditation status annually, and/or participating in the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)
- **Action b:** Develop a professional learning continuum that is based on provider professional goals, licensure requirements, and observational data
- **Action c:** Develop a system for ongoing Infant Mental Health (IMH) consultation by providing professional development and training opportunities
- **Action d:** Develop a system to evaluate the impact of IMH services
- **Supporting Document:** Smart Beginnings Alexandria Common Agenda

**4. Promote our collective early care and education vision through collaborative strategic planning, data-driven decision making, sustainable funding, and policy**

- **Action a:** Develop a data system and data sharing agreements with key partners to capture how children are being served by and benefiting from the early care and education system
- **Action b:** Implement a longitudinal data tracking system to track children as they move to and through the early care and education system
- **Action c:** Better understand the gaps and opportunities related to existing funding streams and capacity, including how to better combine and optimize funding for a more equitable, sustainable, and family and child-centric system
- **Supporting Document:** Smart Beginnings Alexandria Common Agenda



**STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING HEALTH, WELLNESS, AND WELLBEING**

**ACTIONS FOR HEALTHY EATING**

**5. Increase the number of plant-based entrees on the ACPS school lunch menu**

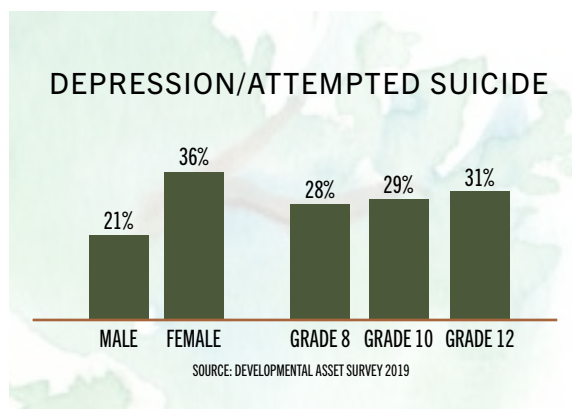
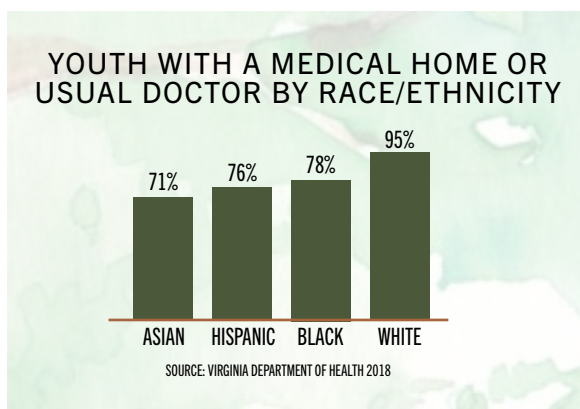
- **Action a:** Implement “Around the World Wednesday” menu to students, a pop-up of globally inspired dishes that are plant-based”
- **Action b:** Implement ACPS’s Farm to School “Harvest of the Month” program. Nutrient-dense products like microgreens, mushrooms, and pea shoots will be brought from local growers into ACPS schools as one-part education and another consumption

**ACTIONS FOR HEALTH CARE**

**6. Connect youth and families to health care resources and services**

- **Action a:** Work with city and nonprofit partners to address the health, social service and academic needs of students and their families
- **Action b:** Engage students and families in identifying needed supports and services and offering them in schools while monitoring utilization of existing and new resources
- **Action c:** Develop communications materials to increase awareness of health resources and services available to students and families in the City of Alexandria





- **Action d:** Create services within living spaces (e.g., health clinic, day care, food distribution, etc.) at a housing unit/ apartment complex, etc
- **Supporting Documents:** ACPS Strategic Plan 2025: Equity for All and CHIP

## ACTIONS FOR PHYSICAL HEALTH

### 7. Enhance and expand sports/recreational programs and activities for students

- **Action a:** Mobilize funding for children's involvement in recreational activities through grant programs
- **Action b:** Strengthen advocacy to include more physical activity into the school day
- **Action c:** Strengthen programming to engage girls in safe physical activities
- **Action d:** Improve and expand access to play spaces throughout Alexandria
- **Action e:** Increase engagement in physical activity and healthy lifestyles to improve health
- **Action f:** Expand opportunities to free and low-

cost physical activity

- **Action g:** Engage students and families in identifying needed supports and services and offering them in schools while monitoring utilization of existing and new resources
- **Supporting Documents:** ACPS Strategic Plan 2025: Equity for All, CHIP, and RPCA Strategic Plan 2023

## ACTIONS FOR MENTAL HEALTH

### 8. Incorporate social, emotional, and academic learning into the school day

- **Action a:** Provide training to school teams in social emotional and academic learning programs
- **Action b:** Invest in professional development so educators and support staff can learn how to incorporate social emotional learning approaches into the school day. Scale up efforts that already exist to reach partners across and outside of the school system
- **Action c:** Include mindfulness and conflict resolution tools in Tier 1 curriculum



**Help youth thrive: Include young people as active participants in events and encourage teenagers to take leadership roles in their community**

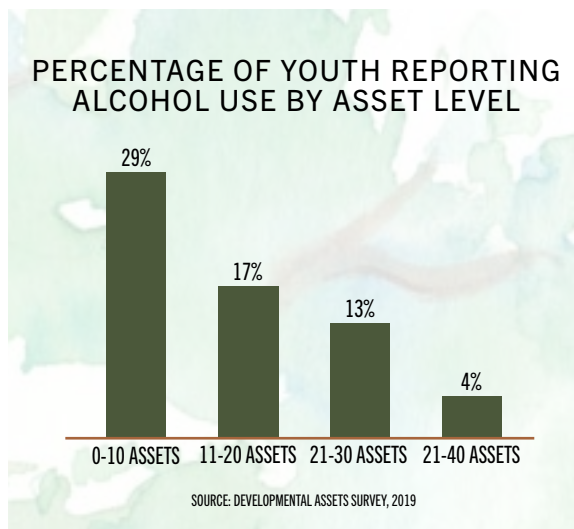
- **Action d:** Conduct a study to assess the viability of pushing back school start times
  - Create structures within the school schedule for delivery of social, emotional, and academic learning (SEAL) through restorative practices and community circles at each school in ACPS
  - **Supporting Documents:** ACPS Strategic Plan 2025: Equity for All
- 9. Increase access to mental health and wellness services, supports, resources, and dialogues**
- **Action a:** Increase access to Family Mental Health Services via Schools
  - **Action b:** Strengthen community-based education, outreach and access around and Family Mental Health
  - **Action c:** Continue to provide and promote mental health trainings and education
  - **Action d:** Integrate mindfulness and movement activities in out of school time programming
  - **Action e:** Engage students and families in identifying needed supports and services and offering them in schools while monitoring utilization of existing and new resources
  - **Action f:** Support existing statewide efforts to develop a system to screen and assess the mental health needs of children birth to 5 by developing an informational and marketing campaign designed to raise awareness of Infant Mental Health (IMH) that include a consideration of prenatal care and parent mental health as it relates to infant mental health

- **Action g:** Support efforts to establish an IMH network comprised of public and private agencies, organizations, coalitions, community groups, and others that incorporate essential components of “promising practices” for Infant Mental Health
- **Supporting Documents:** ACPS Strategic Plan 2025: Equity for All and CHIP

## STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING SAFETY BY PREVENTING RISK-TAKING BEHAVIORS

### ACTIONS FOR PREVENTING YOUTH SUBSTANCE ABUSE

- 10. Enhance connections to and bonding with adults, peers and organizations in the community**
- **Action a:** Hold an annual Youth Leadership Conference
- 11. Provide youth with information about substance use and raise awareness about the impacts of substance use**
- **Action a:** Hold substance-specific community events (alcohol, marijuana, e-cigarettes/vaping, prescription and over-the-counter medication)
  - **Action b:** Provide information about substance use and abuse
  - **Action c:** Host Healthy Conversations events
  - **Action d:** Incorporate substance abuse prevention information into the Human Growth and Development Curriculum
- 12. Modify access to substances and e-cigarettes**
- **Action a:** Provide information about the legal consequences of adults providing substances to minors and minors purchasing, possessing or using substances
- 13. Provide healthy alternative to use**
- **Action a:** Host quarterly Titan Takeover Teen Nights



### ACTIONS FOR PREVENTING YOUTH VIOLENCE AND COURT-INVOLVEMENT

- 14. Support healthy youth development in communities and groups that are**



## Help youth thrive: When setting boundaries for someone else, explain the values behind them

### disproportionately affected by youth court involvement and gang/violence

- **Action a:** Help court-involved youth develop skills to prevent violence, solve conflicts peacefully, and engage in healthy behaviors
- **Action b:** Provide case management, counseling, restorative services, education, and evidence-based services that help you build anger management and life skills
- **Action c:** Provide systems-involved youth with therapeutic services that are designed to help them process traumatic events, manage trauma-related distress, and develop effective coping strategies and skills
- **Action d:** Collectively develop, coordinate and implement gang prevention, intervention and education programs within the region to lessen harms of violence exposure and prevent further involvement in violence
- **Action e:** Support families at-risk of youth violence by creating and strengthening policies to improve household financial security, strengthen access to high quality childcare and education, and implement trauma-informed services
- **Action f:** Identify youth at-risk of gang involvement and connect them with quality mentors and programs that foster social interaction and strengthen social connectedness

### ACTIONS FOR PREVENTING UNINTENDED TEEN PREGNANCY

15. Support ACPS in providing comprehensive K-12 sex ed that is LGBTQ inclusive and includes consent, violence prevention, and refusal skills

- **Action a:** Establish and staff Family Life Education (FLE) workgroup with community/content experts to review current FLE curriculum and make recommendations for revisions and enhancements
- **Action b:** Through the Alexandria Campaign on Adolescent Pregnancy's (ACAP) Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP), provide supplemental sexual health education and technical assistance/support for ACPS Health and P.E./ Human Growth and Development Program
- **Action c:** Advocate at local and state level for policies that improve student access to comprehensive sexual health education

16. Target resources for prevention education and health services specifically for communities and groups that are disproportionately affected by teen pregnancy (i.e. Black and Latina girls, girls ages 18-19)

- **Action a:** Implement ACAP's Latino Outreach Plan to provide prevention messaging and information to Latino community
- **Action b:** Through ACAP's PREP, implement the "El Camino" curriculum with Black and Latino youth, youth in the International Academy, and youth involved in the criminal justice system across various community-based locations
- **Action c:** Identify opportunities to provide prevention information/resources to newly arrived students and families completing enrollment within ACPS
- **Action d:** Provide "Healthy Conversations" or other family engagement program in multiple languages to build family skills related communication about sexual health/pregnancy prevention



## Help youth thrive: Visit museums and libraries and attend plays and concerts with youth

- **Action e:** Through ACAP’s “Wrap Up, Alexandria” condom dispenser initiative, install condom dispensers at various community sites where disproportionately impacted groups reside, work and attend school
- **Action f:** Advocate for resources and funding for Teen Wellness Center and other Alexandria health centers that provide culturally competent sexual health services and education
- **Action b:** Empower peer advocates to educate youth across Alexandria about healthy relationships and prevention through workshops, social media, and forums
- **Action c:** Provide opportunities for peer advocates to engage with City service providers and leaders for exchange of information and perspectives

### ACTIONS FOR PREVENTING SEXUAL AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND BUILDING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

#### 17. Offer programs to empower youth, build self-confidence, and foster healthy relationships with a focus on attracting Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) youth participation

- **Action a:** Convene trained facilitators of the DO YOU curriculum to implement DO YOU programs across the city
- **Action b:** Collaborate with City and non-profit leaders to implement programs that focus on healthy relationships and violence prevention with boys/young men (i.e. the Coaching Boys into Men curriculum)
- **Action c:** Serve as a resource to ACPS staff and teachers on domestic and sexual violence prevention and response (i.e. connecting students with safety resources, providing trainings on SV/DV and healthy relationships, etc.)

#### 18. Support peer to peer education and advocacy through the Keep it 360 Peer Advocate program

- **Action a:** Collaborate to hire and train teen peer advocates in sexual and domestic violence prevention, substance abuse prevention, sexual health education, and general advocacy and presentation skills

### STRATEGIES FOR CONNECTING FAMILIES TO RESOURCES

#### ACTIONS FOR CONNECTING FAMILIES TO TRANSPORTATION

#### 19. Expand access to public transportation among children, youth, and families

- **Action a:** Improve and expand Alexandria’s public transit system so that passenger rail and bus systems are safe, reliable, accessible, convenient, attractive, efficient, and equitable
- **Action b:** Conduct an evaluation of school transportation with a focus on timeliness and safety of buses
- **Action c:** Promote vibrant, human-scale city streets that prioritize people’s access and mobility so that all Alexandria residents and visitors have access to the commercial and cultural resources of the city
- **Action d:** In collaboration with DASH, increase access to transportation for students and families
- **Supporting Document:** ACPS Strategic Plan 2025 and Environmental Action Plan 2040

## ACTIONS FOR CONNECTING IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE FAMILIES TO RESOURCES

### 20. Empower the voices and experiences of immigrant and refugee communities to identify and address inequities and system gaps

- **Action a:** Bridge system gaps by improving resource sharing among local agencies serving immigrant populations
- **Action b:** Determine the needs of the immigrant community and the systems that serve them by conducting outreach to staff and clients
- **Action c:** Promote equity and intersectionality by hosting cultural events and facilitating community dialogues and conversations about culture
- **Action d:** Promote equity and inclusion through truth and storytelling to help a broader audience understand the experiences of refugees and immigrants living in Alexandria

## ACTIONS FOR CONNECTING PARENTS TO EMPLOYMENT

### 21. Increase parents' access to employment resources and opportunities

- **Action a:** Enhance existing apprenticeships and expand the number of apprenticeship programs
- **Action b:** Seek foundation funding to create a new communications and outreach infrastructure that (1) provides a peer liaison neighborhood network and (2) a technical network for access to all services, resources and opportunities to advance opportunities for upward mobility
- **Action c:** Build strong connections between the Alexandria Small Business Development Center and minority populations to expand the number

of minority-owned businesses

- **Action d:** Create a safety net for small businesses
- **Supporting Document:** CHIP

## ACTIONS FOR CONNECTING FAMILIES TO THEIR BASIC NEEDS

### 22. Create the conditions for families to meet their basic needs and move out of poverty

- **Action a:** Increase quality, equity, and relevance of education for youth in and out of schools
- **Action b:** Increase availability and lower costs of childcare and programming
- **Action c:** Address disparities in the criminal justice system
- **Action d:** Establish employer and employee friendly policies
- **Action e:** Fund tech or other skills training for vulnerable populations
- **Action f:** Expand opportunities for community-centered financial resources
- **Supporting Document:** CHIP

## ACTIONS FOR CONNECTING FAMILIES TO SAFE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

### 23. Make Alexandria a more affordable place to live, especially for low-income families and the city's workforce

- **Action a:** Preserve the long-term affordability of committed affordable and market affordable/workforce affordable housing
- **Action b:** Secure long-term affordable and workforce rental housing through strategic new development/redevelopment




Help youth thrive: Believe that all young people can learn

- **Action c:** Secure affordable and workforce affordable for-sale housing through strategic development/redevelopment and support affordable and workforce home purchase opportunities for Alexandria residents and workers
  - **Action d:** Identify and support creative land use and other models for affordable and market rate housing
  - **Action e:** Provide sustainable and predictive housing for individuals and families across incomes
  - **Action f:** Provide additional needed services in housing to reflect community needs and values
  - **Action g:** Increase funding for housing development
  - **Supporting Document:** CHIP and Alexandria Housing Master Plan
- 24. Support healthy, well-designed, and energy efficient housing that fosters the well-being of Alexandria residents**
- **Action a:** Assist rehabilitation of existing multifamily properties and encourage improved housing conditions, including energy efficiency and indoor air quality
  - **Action b:** Promote smoke-free air policies within all committed affordable housing units and encourage owners to offer residents access to effective smoking cessation services
  - **Action c:** Assist homeowners in assessing energy efficiency and indoor air quality through home audits and assessments. Provide access to affordable loan products for improving the quality of their immediate living environment
  - **Action d:** Ensure availability of affordable housing options for non-elderly disabled individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities

- **Supporting Document:** Alexandria Housing Master Plan

## STRATEGIES FOR PRESERVING OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

### ACTIONS FOR A HEALTHY NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- 25. Protect the health and sustainability of Alexandria’s natural environment**
- **Action a:** Preserve and expand a healthy urban tree canopy
  - **Action b:** Preserve, manage, and increase open space
  - **Action c:** Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution
  - **Action d:** Reduce solid waste
  - **Action e:** Make Alexandria’s waterbodies swimmable
  - **Action f:** Ensure safe drinking water
  - **Action h:** Investigate mold complaints
  - **Supporting Document:** Environmental Action Plan 2040
- 26. Introduce environmental education at younger age**
- **Action a:** Update environmental education in the ACPS curriculum, focusing on City-specific sustainability issues. This work may include creating resources to facilitate student education and outreach
  - **Action b:** Offer hands-on and informative nature programs to help us appreciate our natural resources
  - **Supporting Documents:** Environmental Action Plan 2040 and RPCA Strategic Plan 2023 




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**Help youth thrive: Organize a neighborhood book swap**

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# Goal 2: Every Child will be Academically Successful and Career Ready

## OUTCOME OBJECTIVE: ADVANCE EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

### RATIONALE

The ACPS Strategic Plan 2025 places racial equity at the center of everything.

*“It challenges us to ensure our students are engaged in classroom instruction and have access to the educational resources needed to enhance their learning experiences. It will ensure that our schools are a safe, friendly and welcoming environment for all. It also sets clear division-wide priorities and programs to address opportunity and achievement gaps as well as makes sure that all students graduate ready for college, careers and life. The vision is big and bold, and the potential is enormous.” (ACPS Strategic Plan 2025, p. 1).*

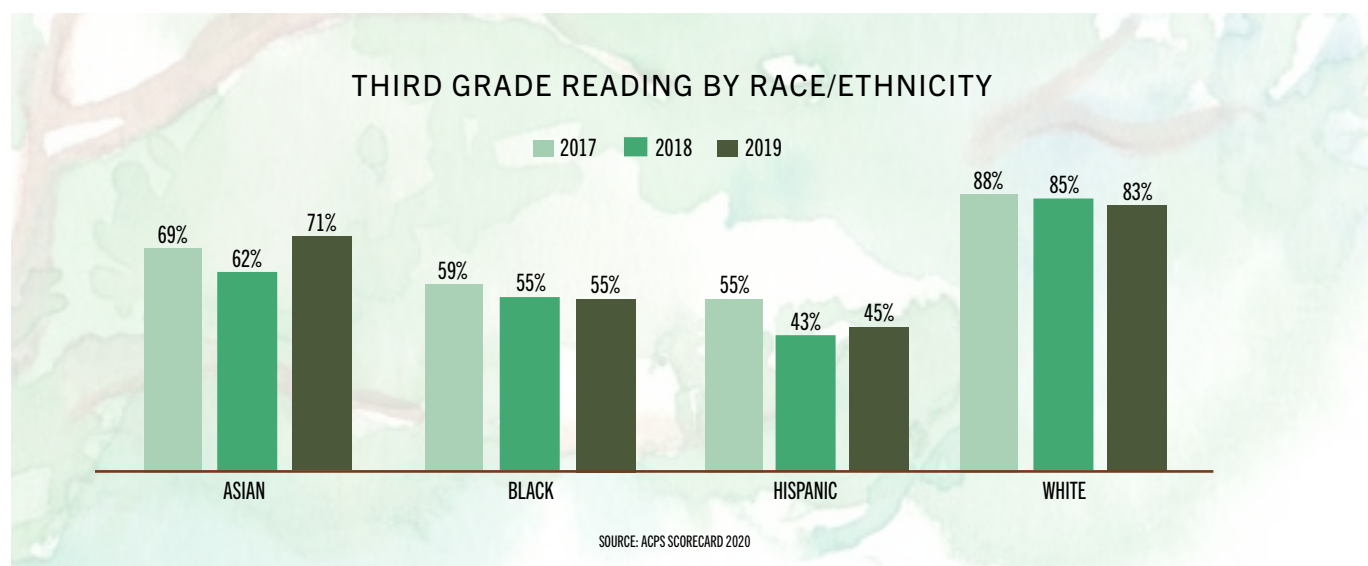
### QUALITATIVE DATA

- The theme of educational equity and academic success was mentioned 227 times during 89 workshops, making this the second most mentioned theme. Within this theme, supportive school climate

and encouraging teachers were the most mentioned subthemes. Students want their schools and teachers to create supportive learning environments that help them “develop critical thinking skills” and provide them with “different ways to express [their] knowledge other than testing.”

### FUTURE VICTORIES!

- “Students are supported academically” and “are well educated and come to school ready to learn”
- “100% of third graders are meeting reading benchmarks”
- “Stronger support for English language learners;” “More integration of international academy students so they can learn English;” and “Increased academic success among Hispanic students”
- “More minority representation in AP classes”
- “Smaller class sizes,” “smaller schools,” and “schools are less crowded”
- “More resources and high-quality programs for kids with learning disabilities”
- “People enjoy school more” and students “find school motivating” and carry “school pride”



## STRATEGIES FOR FOSTERING SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

### ACTIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

#### 27. Promote equity and inclusion at the school and classroom level

- **Action a:** Engage students and families in identifying needed supports and services and offering them in schools while monitoring utilization of existing and new resources
- **Action b:** Improve students' and families' experiences during key transitions in their educational journey
- **Action c:** Identify and remove educational barriers and provide supports to students who are identified as experiencing homelessness as defined by the McKinney-Vento Act
- **Action d:** Identify and remove barriers to higher education among Latino students
- **Action e:** Ensure that all eligible youth with intellectual and other developmental disability diagnoses are assessed and placed on the Developmental Disabilities Waiver Services waiting list by age 18 years to ensure a seamless transition from high school to higher education, career readiness or other desired plan for independence
- **Supporting Document:** ACPS Strategic Plan 2025: Equity for All

### ACTIONS FOR CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY

#### 28. Strengthen technology infrastructure

- **Action a:** At minimum, maintain funding for purchasing, maintaining and coordinating technology and for building capacity for its use through professional learning
- **Action b:** Provide a reliable, scalable and transparent technology infrastructure that facilitates the operation of the school division and supports greater access and equity
- **Action c:** Fund tech or other skills training for vulnerable populations
- **Supporting Documents:** ACPS Strategic Plan 2025: Equity for All and CHIP

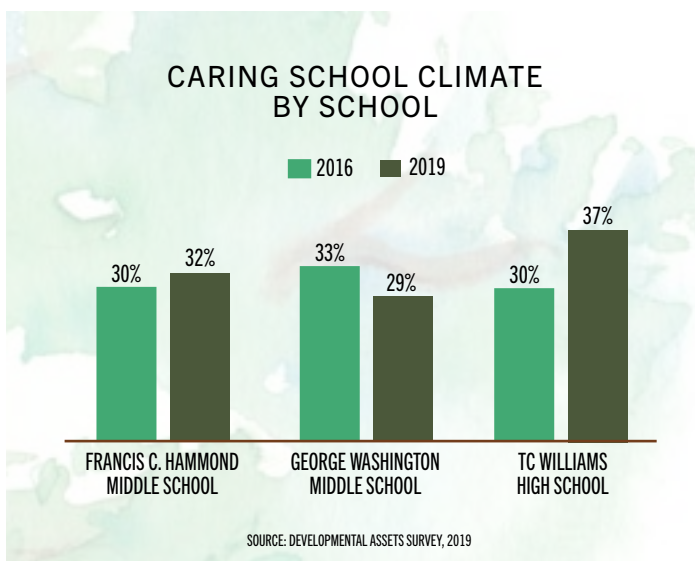
## OUTCOME OBJECTIVE: SUPPORT COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

### QUALITATIVE DATA

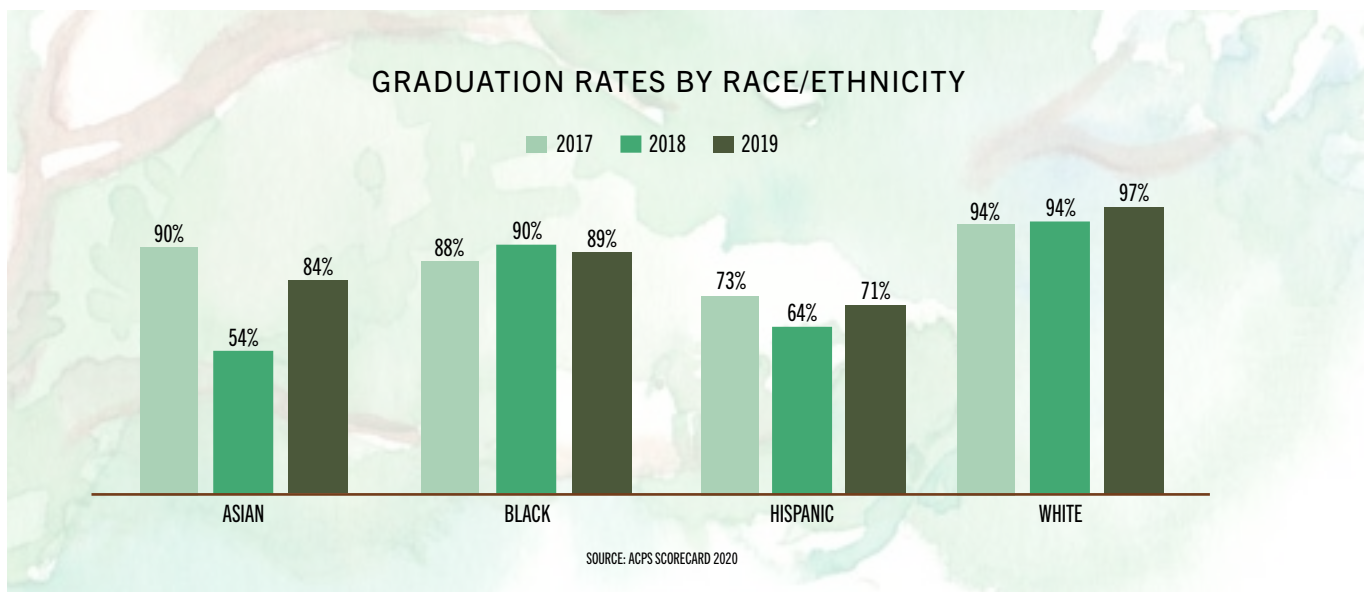
- The theme of College and Career Readiness emerged approximately 115 times during the Legacy Workshops. For all youth who want to be employed, stakeholders will create the conditions in Alexandria for these youth to be “engaged in meaningful work which lead to better careers.” Seniors and graduates feel “supported through their transition,” “receive guidance to find better jobs,” and have “access to college and career readiness programs and apprenticeships.” “Underserved populations have more places to get higher education and services.”

### FUTURE VICTORIES!

- “100% on time graduation rates” and youth to “have a plan for [their] future”
- “100% of youth who want employment can access it;” “Decreased youth unemployment rate”
- “Counselors and educators are better equipped to meet the needs of students of color and undocumented students through college process”
- “People have access to more affordable/free higher education”
- “More youth enroll in and graduate from higher education”
- “Students are prepared for alternatives to college”







- “Young people have opportunities to travel, explore, and experience different cultures”

## STRATEGIES FOR LIGHTING PATHWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREERS

### ACTIONS FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER SUCCESS

#### 29. Increase youth access to the resources they need for educational and career success


- **Action a:** Engage business partners to expand opportunities for students
- **Action c:** Implement the High School Project
- **Action d:** Fund tech or other skills training for vulnerable populations
- **Action e:** Equip Alexandria’s youth for economic success through training, employment, entre-

preneurship, and leadership development

- **Supporting Document:** ACPS Strategic Plan 2025: Equity for All and CHIP

### ACTIONS FOR WORK-BASED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

#### 30. Advocate for programs that enhance youth leadership skills, workforce skills, and Virginia’s 5 Cs (Critical Thinking, Collaboration, Communication, Creative Thinking, and Citizenship Skills)

- **Action a:** In coordination/collaboration with Career and Technical Education programs, develop and implement a sequence of work-based learning opportunities for students in middle and high schools
- **Supporting Document:** ACPS Strategic Plan 2025: Equity for All 



**Help youth thrive: Let youth know you are proud of their talents, capabilities, and discoveries**



# Goal 3: Every Young Person and their Family will have Positive Experiences

## OUTCOME OBJECTIVE: DECREASE ACES, INCREASE ASSETS

Whether positive or negative, early experiences in life matter. Just as adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) can lead to lifelong negative health outcomes in adults, positive childhood experiences (PCEs) support child development and protect against the effects of ACEs. For example, PCEs prevent the development of depression and poor mental health, even in adults who had many adverse childhood experiences. PCEs, or the 40 Developmental Assets®, contribute to health equity by highlighting positive influences that support resilience in the face of historic trauma and institutional racism.

Therefore, the CYMP has been intentionally framed around preventing ACEs and building Developmental

Assets® that create a strong foundation for children to learn and to grow into resilient, healthy adults. Goal Three of the CYMP recommends strategies for building safe, stable, and nurturing relationships and environments, creating trauma-informed and resilient communities, and building Developmental Assets®.

### QUALITATIVE DATA

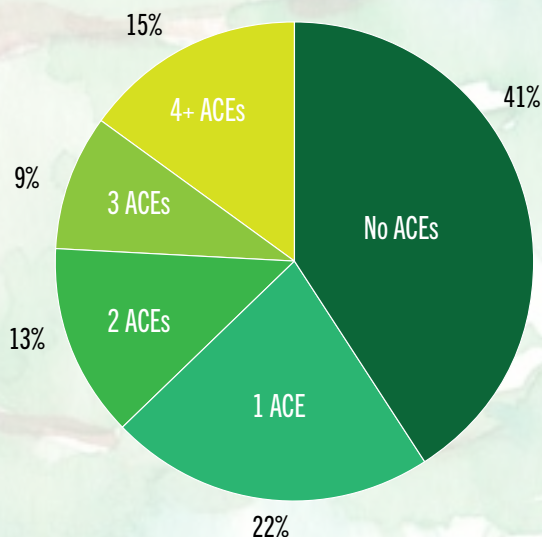
■ Ideas related to decreasing ACEs and increasing assets emerged over 200 times during the Legacy Workshops. Stakeholders envision a future with more “caring adults,” “youth voice,” “youth engagement,” “opportunities to lead and make decisions,” “community and social events,” and “trauma responsive organizations.” Youth dream of a future where “adults are more respectful,” “open-minded,” “have the tools to engage and affirm youth,” “listen to understand youth,” “value youth as partners,” and “intentionally build assets.” In the future, it’s also important that “youth feel valued,” “loved,” and “respected.” Alexandrians “support each other” “come together,” and “connect with each other more.”

### FUTURE VICTORIES!

- “100% of youth serving providers are trained in trauma and ACEs”
- “100% of youth have caring adults in their life and Increased # of supportive, caring adults”
- “75%-100% of youth feel like adults value them”
- “Youth will be viewed as resource in the city”
- “Youth know their strengths and know their voice matters”
- “More youth volunteering”
- “All youth have 31 or more assets”

PERCENT OF ADULTS REPORTING ONE OR MORE ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACEs) DURING THEIR CHILDHOOD

SOURCE: VIRGINIA BRFS



## STRATEGIES FOR DECREASING ACES

### ACTIONS FOR POSITIVE EXPERIENCES AT HOME

#### 31. Minimize and prevent exposure to ACEs and trauma in the household

- **Action a:** Increase community access to behavioral health and substance use services for all Alexandrians
- **Action b:** Provide education, information, and resources to reduce incidents of/exposure to assault and intimate partner violence
- **Action c:** Engage families in creating and maintaining supportive, nurturing, and structured environments
- **Action d:** Resource/Support child-centered systems of care that effectively meet the needs of youth and their families
- **Action e:** Address disparities in the criminal justice system
- **Supporting Document:** CHIP

### ACTIONS FOR POSITIVE EXPERIENCES IN THE COMMUNITY

#### 32. Strengthen and maintain relationships with Alexandria's Law Enforcement

- **Action a:** Maintain and support meaningful relationships with ACPS and private schools
- **Action b:** Support youth and community outreach efforts with ACPS students and faculty
- **Action c:** Develop positive relationships with

youth in the community

- **Action d:** Create and maintain partnerships with other city youth agencies
- **Action e:** Establish and maintain existing partnerships with Faith-Based groups and individuals
- **Supporting Document:** Alexandria Police Department (APD) Strategic Initiatives 2022

#### 33. Expand access to and availability of physical spaces with trusted, caring adults, where youth can feel safe when not in school

- **Action a:** Ensure teens have access to safe spaces and engaging programming to develop into strong adults
- **Supporting Document:** RPCA Strategic Plan 2023

### ACTIONS FOR POSITIVE EXPERIENCES AT SCHOOL

#### 34. Maintain the physical environment of school buildings and school grounds as well as the physical safety of students

- **Action a:** Ensure effective policing strategies to address crime at all public and private schools
- **Action b:** Ensure the safety of the children as they walk to and from school
- **Action c:** Modernize school facilities at the elementary, middle and high school levels
- **Action d:** Implement 10-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) plan which includes funding for security upgrades and projects



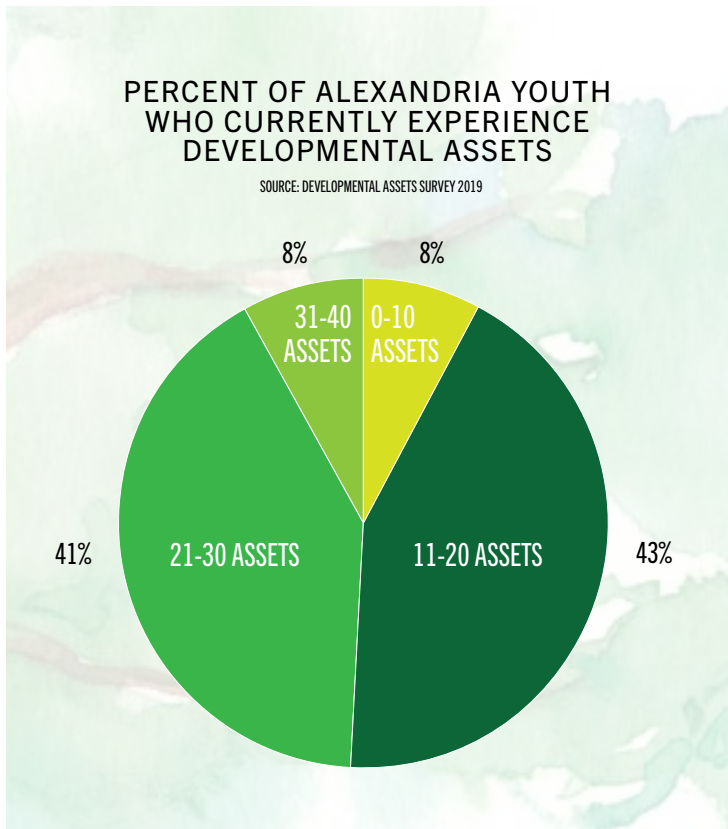
**Help youth thrive: Respect teenagers' privacy but take an interest in their friends and activities**



## Help youth thrive: Listen when young people talk about their sense of purpose

- **Action e:** Continue to focus on preventative maintenance within ACPS facilities
  - **Supporting Document:** APD Strategic Initiatives 2022, ACPS Strategic Plan 2025: Equity for All, and ACPS Facilities Plan
- 35. Prevent bullying by providing education, building Developmental Assets®, and growing awareness among community**
- **Action a:** Review and evaluate current reporting structures for bullying (how is bullying data being collected/reported)

- **Action b:** Develop and implement a communications plan to deliver bullying prevention information to the community (City e-newsletter, neighborhood newsletters, ACPS Express, social media, comprehensive website (City and ACPS), print materials and promotional items). Materials should be developed in multiple languages
- **Action c:** Establish calendar of four “Unity Days” (awareness days) per year in the City of Alexandria
- **Action d:** Advocate for adoption of bullying prevention curriculum/program in every school and recreation center, nonprofits’ out of school programs, and in youth childcare programs and youth camps
- **Action g:** Provide a yearly budget to allocate funding to the Mayor’s Campaign to End Bullying Committee for implementing and providing awareness programs and special events



## STRATEGIES FOR ADOPTING TRAUMA-INFORMED AND RESILIENCE BUILDING PRACTICES

### ACTIONS FOR BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

- 36. Create a more trauma-informed and resilient Alexandria by informing, supporting, and elevating our community**
- **Action a:** Support existing efforts that aim to promote community wellness and resiliency
  - **Action b:** Promote the use of the equity lens in decision making

- **Action c:** Deliver trainings focused on ACEs, trauma, and resilience
- **Action d:** Support organizations becoming trauma-informed by providing them with technical assistance in transforming their spaces, policies, and procedures
- **Action e:** Elevate the voices and experiences of marginalized communities to promote healing, reconciliation, and justice and advance policies that dismantle systems that perpetuate racial trauma and inequity
- **Supporting Document:** RAISE Transformation Plan

## STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS®

### ACTIONS FOR ASSET BUILDING

#### 37. Support schools and organizations in adopting the Developmental Assets Framework®

- **Action a:** Provide technical assistance and trainings
- **Action b:** Create a resource clearinghouse where people can go for assets resources and to request and register for trainings
- **Action c:** Roll out a messaging campaign on the importance of asset building

### ACTIONS FOR SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS

#### 38. Provide fun and free community activities, clubs, and social events that promote social connectedness by:

- **Action a:** Develop communications materials to increase awareness of fun and free community

activities, clubs, and social events to students and families in Alexandria

- **Action b:** Create trauma-informed and inclusive spaces and practices when facilitating positive youth development
- **Action c:** Strengthen access, quality, and quantity of programs, community activities, clubs, and social events that promote social connectedness

### ACTIONS FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

#### 39. Promote youth empowerment by sharing decision-making power with youth

- **Action a:** Provide youth with the training, support, and encouragement needed to lead and make decisions, and provide adults with the training, support, and encouragement needed to engage youth
- **Action b:** Increase access to information about youth engagement opportunities
- **Action c:** Provide leadership and decision-making opportunities for youth

### ACTIONS FOR CARING ADULTS

#### 40. Ensure that every young person is embedded in a web of positive relationships with trusted, caring adults

- **Action a:** Focus mentoring efforts to close the gaps that exist in communities of color and among males
- **Action b:** Include the importance of mentoring in the Assets Messaging Campaign
- **Action c:** Strengthen community settings so they inspire youth-adult relationships and asset building



Help youth thrive: Dwell on what children do right instead of what they do wrong



## Help youth thrive: Teach children and youth how to be safe wherever they go

- **Action d:** Leverage resources to support mentoring programs and ongoing mentor development and retention within the Alexandria Mentoring Partnership
- **Action e:** Incentivize the workforce to work with young people


### ACTIONS FOR SERVICE TO OTHERS

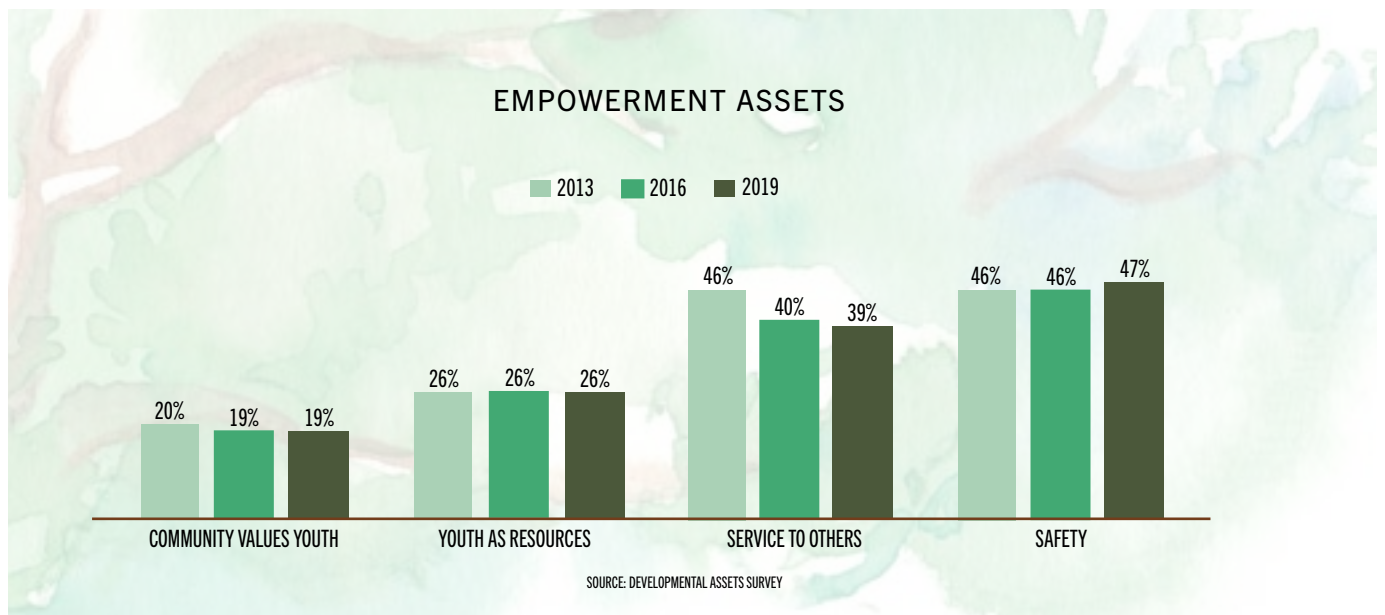
#### 41. Create more and expand opportunities for youth to volunteer in their community

- **Action a:** Expand and enhance opportunities to volunteer
- **Action b:** Inform young people of the available volunteer opportunities

### ACTIONS FOR OUT OF SCHOOL TIME PROGRAMS

#### 42. Support the development and alignment of and equitable access to high-quality out of school time programs

- **Action a:** Prepare afterschool providers for the post-COVID transition by disseminating information about Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) science and sharing best practices for trauma-informed practice
- **Action b:** Conduct a needs assessment of professional learning opportunities with staff involved in Division-wide after school programming
- **Action c:** Improve impact of out-of-school learning opportunities
- **Supporting Document:** ACPS Strategic Plan 2025: Equity for All 



# Overarching Strategies for Effective, Equitable, and Respectful Quality Care, Services, and Personnel

## OUTCOME OBJECTIVE: COORDINATED AND EQUITABLE SYSTEMS

In the aftermath of the global pandemic, cities like Alexandria are facing severe budget deficits and are figuring out how to do more with less – how to help more individuals and families bounce back from adversity while deciding where to make cuts to the budget. While helpful, more is needed than just generating lists of programs and disseminating information to the public. To be successful in our endeavors, Alexandria needs its institutions that serve children and families to come together in a coordinated response to address the most pressing issues facing our youth and families.

Moreover, these institutions need to come together to address the root causes that are keeping them in place – they need to ask what’s in our soil and what can we do together to make it better. What are the policies and practices that are causing harm? Where can we redirect our resources to make the greatest impact? Where can we share more of the decision-making power among the people impacted by these decisions? What can we do to bring about lasting, transformative change?


In alignment with the City’s ALL Alexandria Resolution, Alexandria’s schools and City departments that serve children will adopt practices and policies centered on creating and ensuring racial and social equity. As such, they have agreed to work together to implement the following strategies that aim to improve the nutrients in our soil.

## STRATEGIES FOR SYSTEMICALLY ADDRESSING RACISM AND ADVANCING EQUITY

1. Design, implement, and evaluate solutions that undo racism, end discrimination, and advance equity

- **Action a:** Elevate youth and family voice in decisions that affect their lives (include advocacy)
- **Action b:** Provide effective, equitable, and respectful quality care, services, and personnel that are responsive to and respectful of diverse cultural beliefs and practices, preferred languages, levels of literacy and other communication needs
- **Action c:** Adopt the consistent use of the racial equity and empowerment lens when making key decisions

## STRATEGIES FOR STRENGTHENING CAPACITY

2. Strengthen organizational capacity in the areas of staffing, infrastructure, communication, funding, planning, monitoring, evaluation, and professional development
  - **Action a:** Develop and use a common system of measurement to improve the delivery of services
  - **Action b:** Equip the workforce with the tools, funding, and resources they need to support young people and provide them with high-quality care
  - **Action c:** Assess and strengthen the current mechanisms (City-School Staff Group (SSG), Youth Services Coordinating Council (YSCC), and other cross-systems bodies) for collaboration, information sharing, and problem-solving across child- and youth-serving agencies
  - **Action d:** Strengthen marketing (branding and framing), communication, and ease of access to information so youth, families, and service providers know what resources are available 

# Conclusion

Alexandria's Children and Youth Master Plan is comprehensive and aspirational, but its intent is simple – to make Alexandria the best place for children and youth to grow up. The Plan brings together youth and the people and systems who care for them to create the conditions for all young people to thrive. It ties together city-wide plans that will make a positive difference in the lives of Alexandria's youngest members. More importantly, the Plan amplifies youth voice. It reflects what is most critical to today's youth growing up in Alexandria. By helping to develop and implement this Plan, youth are leaving their legacy and it is up to every adult to support and sustain it.

Some of the key milestones and Victories! you can expect over the next five years across Alexandria's youth-serving systems are listed below.

## EARLY CHILDHOOD VICTORIES!

With the continuation of Smart Beginnings work to foster an aligned, coordinated, and accessible early care and education system, we will see:

- increased participation in prenatal care, healthier birth weights, more children with medical homes, and more children receiving immunizations; and
- more children benefiting from high-quality, culturally responsive learning experiences.

## HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES VICTORIES!

Through the collaborative work of the Prevention Work Group, by 2025 there will be:

- more young people and their families who know how to access the health care resources and services available to them; and
- more youth ready to learn and able to manage a range of emotions, form and maintain good relationships with others, and cope with change and uncertainty because they have good mental health.

## HOUSING AND ECONOMIC VICTORIES!

Strategies supported in the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) and Alexandria's Housing Master Plan will result in:

- Alexandria becoming a more affordable place to live, especially for low-income families and the city's workforce; and
- an increased number of children who grow up in healthy, well-designed, and energy efficient housing.

## ENVIRONMENTAL AND TRANSPORTATION VICTORIES!

After the Environmental Action Plan and the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Affairs (RPCA) Strategic Plan 2023 have been implemented, the next generation of youth will enjoy: expanded public transit; protected open spaces; preserved tree canopy; reduced greenhouse gas emissions; safe and adequate drinking water supply; reduced risk of flooding; and improved water quality.

## EDUCATIONAL VICTORIES!

Through the implementation of the ACPS Strategic Plan 2025, CHIP 2025, and DCHS initiatives, we can expect to see:

- improved student outcomes in reading and math and opportunity gaps eliminated among low-income students, Black and Hispanic students, English learners, and students with disabilities; and
- a greater percentage of 9th grade students and Latino students on track to graduate high school in four years and enrolling in higher education.

## CHILD WELFARE, AND JUVENILE JUSTICE VICTORIES!

Through the implementation of the Crossover Youth Practice Model, Alexandria will see reductions in:

- the number of young people entering the child welfare and juvenile justice systems; and
- disproportionate representation of youth of color in the crossover population.

## PUBLIC SAFETY VICTORIES!

Through the implementation of the Alexandria Police Department's (APD) Strategic Initiatives, there will be more positive relationships with youth, youth-serving



agencies, faith-based groups, and individuals.

Through RPCA Strategic Plan, youth will have greater access to physical spaces with trusted, caring adults, where they can feel safe when not in school.

### **YOUTH DEVELOPMENT VICTORIES!**

Because the Developmental Assets Work Group supported schools and organizations in adopting the Developmental Assets Framework®, a greater percentage of youth will:


- have 31 or more assets, setting them up for lifelong success;
- feel valued in their communities;
- be connected to a web of caring adults;
- serve in leadership positions and be civically engaged; and
- engage in service to others and give back to their community.

### **CROSS-SYSTEMS VICTORIES!**

As a result of ongoing coordination, communication, and collaboration among ACPS and City staff:

- Alexandria's youth-serving systems will have enough capacity to serve all of Alexandria's vulnerable children; and
- fewer racial and social disparities will exist.

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To learn more about the City's youth and family services, training opportunities, building positive relationships with youth, and how you can make a difference in your community, you can fill out an interest form here: [www.research.net/r/AlexandriaVA-CYMPIInterestForm](http://www.research.net/r/AlexandriaVA-CYMPIInterestForm). 

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**Alexandria's Children and Youth Master Plan is comprehensive and aspirational, but its intent is simple — to make Alexandria the best place for children and youth to grow up.**

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