

Arlington's Bridges Out of Poverty initiative is about...

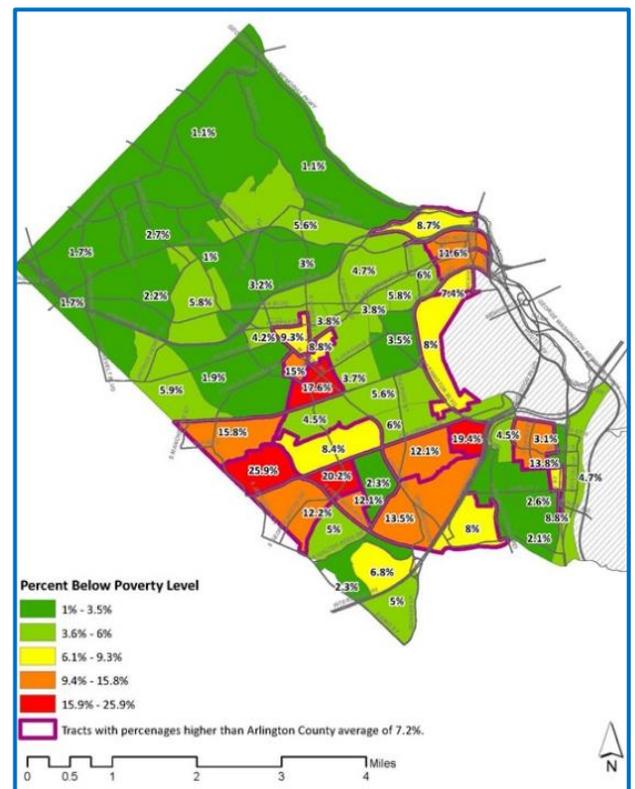


WHAT? Arlington Bridges Out of Poverty is an initiative to move beyond stabilizing people in poverty to promoting their economic mobility. It involves change at the individual, systems, and policy levels.

WHY? About 28,000 people in Arlington are struggling on less than \$35,000 for a household of four. The traditional service system does not adequately address the barriers that prevent them from thriving.

WHO? Arlington Community Foundation and Department of Human Services; 100 leaders from nonprofit and County programs; 200+ front-line staff; Urban Institute; Empath Mobility Mentoring.

HOW? We are changing ways of doing business by understanding the concrete experiences of life in poverty and using our collective spheres of influence to help people gain traction and move forward.



Reducing the social costs of poverty, strengthening the workforce, and building a more equitable and sustainable community are goals on which most communities agree.

See reverse side

The Arlington Community Foundation, Arlington DHS, and Arlington nonprofits are working to make our safety-net system more effective in helping people become economically mobile through the **Bridges Out of Poverty Community Initiative**. Nearly 30 public and private organizations convene quarterly to share expertise and challenges in the work.

Through dialogue and training, we have become more aware of how the realities of poverty clash with the systems designed by and for the middle class. We've identified bottlenecks and redundancies in the safety-net system that waste time that could be used more productively. We've worked on being more relational, streamlined the consent process with a Common Release of Information form, built new platforms for sharing information, and created same day access for certain services. The hope is that these efforts will reduce burdens in navigating the system and ultimately allow people to better meet their potential.

With assistance from Urban Institute and EMPATH Mobility Mentoring, we are continually building skills and innovative approaches across our community service network.

200 Bridges Pilot

In fall 2018, we began testing our new practices with families with multi-faceted challenges. The goal of 200 Bridges is to help these families improve their mobility, defined as: 1) increased income and assets; 2) increased personal control over their lives; and 3) a greater sense of belonging to the community. Participating families have a single trusted system navigator and build resources in housing, health, mental health, employment, child care, education, and social capital. We use a multi-generation approach, focusing on the needs of both the children and the adults.

What will success look like?

- Adults and children in poverty will have improved outcomes in the key life domains.
- We will learn as a community what is and is not effective in helping people become more mobile.
- We will have more data and perspective on barriers to well-being and community involvement among our lowest income residents in Arlington.
- We will have community-wide indices on quality of life measures for everyone, including affordable housing, employment, affordable child care, and access to health and mental health services.



PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

AHC Inc.
Arlington Community Foundation
Arlington County Aging and Disability Services
Arlington County Behavioral Health Services
Arlington County Community Assistance Bureau
Arlington County Community Health Services
Arlington County Housing Assistance Bureau
Arlington County Public Assistance Bureau
Arlington Employment Center
Arlington Food Assistance Center
Arlington Free Clinic
Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing
Arlington Pediatric Center
Arlington Public Schools Welcome Center
Arlington Thrive
A-SPAN
Bonder and Amanda Johnson Community Development Corporation
Bridges to Independence
Bu-Gata
Carlin Springs Community School
Doorways for Women and Families
Just Neighbors
Legal Aid Justice Center
Neighborhood Health
Northern Virginia Family Service
Offender Aid and Restoration
REEP
Shirlington Employment and Education Center

