

ARLINGTON AFFORDABLE HOUSING



Despite concerted efforts to increase Arlington affordable housing, the number of affordable housing units has declined.

CONTEXT

A home is considered affordable if it is of decent quality and costs no more than 30% of a household's gross monthly income for both the rent/mortgage and utility payments.¹ The Affordable Housing Study and the subsequent Affordable Housing Master Plan (AHMP), adopted in 2015, were prompted by the long-standing concern for affordable housing in Arlington. The AHMP includes policy focused on ensuring (1) an adequate supply of housing, (2) all segments of the community have access to housing, and (3) housing efforts contribute to a sustainable community. It also includes a monitoring and reporting plan, with indicators available online.

Arlington offers housing assistance such as the Housing Choice Voucher Program (formerly known as Section 8) and Housing Grants. The Housing Grants program provides rental assistance to low-income residents and covers a portion of monthly rent. Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV) help low-income families, the elderly, and people with disabilities find affordable housing on the private market. As of 2018, there are approximately 5,000 people on the waitlist with an estimated waiting period of 5 years.

FINDINGS

AHMP's goal is to have 17.7% of all housing units in Arlington be affordable to households at or below 60% of the area median income (AMI). In 2017, only 8.2% of the rental housing stock met that criteria and that percentage has continued to decline. Additionally, the majority of affordable housing units that are available are for a family making 61-80% of the area median income, or up to \$93,760 for a family of four. This is over 3 times as much money as a family receiving housing assistance would make; with their average household income closer to \$25,000.

Arlington's middle class is also greatly limited in its housing options. An Arlington family making around the median household income (approximately \$110,000/year) can comfortably afford a home for \$450,000. However, recent sales records show that family homes that are being sold in Arlington are well above that amount.

ARLINGTON AFFORDABLE HOUSING MEASURES			
	2000	2008	2017
Families Receiving Housing Choice Vouchers ² *	1,094	821	707
Families Receiving Housing Grants ²	155	241	318
Market-rate affordable housing units (60% AMI) ²	19,740	6,283	2,445
Market-rate affordable housing units (61-80% of AMI) ²	8,231	9,768	11,933
Committed Affordable Units ²	3,921	6,001	7,729
Total Affordable Units	31,891	22,052	22,107

*HCV defines a family as anyone not elderly or disabled. This is a change in reporting parameters that started in 2000.

