

## City of Alexandria, Virginia

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** SEPTEMBER 23, 2011

**TO:** THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** BRUCE JOHNSON, ACTING CITY MANAGER

**SUBJECT:** THE EMPLOYMENT PICTURE AND CHALLENGES IN THE CITY OF ALEXANDRIA

---

**ISSUE:** The employment picture and challenges in the City of Alexandria.

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council receive this report.

**BACKGROUND:** The Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS), *JobLink* "One-Stop Career Center" was formed in 1996 to provide employment and training opportunities to the citizens of Alexandria who are in pursuit of full or part-time employment, upgrades to their current skills or to get a better job than currently held. *JobLink* also operates the Mayor's Youth Initiative: Summer Youth Employment Program. *JobLink* has served several thousand citizens over that period of time through a myriad of City and grant funded programs.

**DISCUSSION:** The "employment picture" for Alexandria is affected by both the local and national economy. Alexandria and the Washington Metropolitan region have enjoyed very low unemployment rates relative to the state and the country. However, the City and region are not immune from national and state trends. In 2000, the City's unemployment rate was 1.8%, but the events of September 11, 2001, caused the rate to jump to 2.7%. It rose to 3.4% before declining to 3% in 2003. The rate remained steady (between 2.2% and 2.7%) until 2009 when it jumped to 4.9%. It has remained above 4.0% throughout fiscal year 2011 (*Source: Virginia Employment Commission, Local Area Unemployment Statistics*). These data are regularly reported to City Council in the monthly financial report.

As the local and national economy has faltered, many City residents have lost jobs. The top five occupation groups with the largest number of unemployment claims in the City are Business and Financial Operations, Construction, Sales and Related Occupations, Management, and Office and Administrative Support (*Source: Virginia Employment Commission, Local Area Unemployment Statistics*).

The industries with the highest number of new hires in the City are Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; Accommodation and Food Services; Retail Trade; Administrative and Support, and Waste Management.

Our challenge will be the match between the skills of City residents and the nature of available jobs.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** None.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- I. Power Point Presentation
- II. *Alexandria Works!* Coalition Report

**STAFF:**

Debra R. Collins, Assistant City Manager

Michael Gilmore, Director, Department of Community and Human Services

Suzanne Chis, Deputy Department Director, DCHS

Dennis McKinney, Director, Center for Economic Support, DCHS

**Department of Community and  
Human Services**

**Center for Economic Support**



*Job***Link**



**One-Stop Career Center**

3



# Alexandria Employment Picture

## Alexandria Unemployment Rate

June 2009	5.1
June 2010	4.7
June 2011	4.8

<b>Alexandria Labor Force</b>	97,021
<b>Unemployed Residents</b>	<5,000
<b>Average Annual Wage</b>	\$60,632

## Top Three Employers (by number of employees)

Commerce Department (includes PTO)  
 Defense Department  
 Alexandria City Public Schools

## Industries with most Unemployment Insurance Claimants

Professional, Scientific and Technical Svcs.  
 Admin and Support and Waste Mgt.  
 Construction  
 Health Care  
 Hospitality and Food Service

## New Hires by Industry and Weekly Wage

Professional, Scientific, Tech	\$2,238
Admin Support, Waste Mgt.	\$ 846
Hospitality & Food Services	\$ 461
Retail	\$ 673
Other Services	\$1,347



# City Population Data

# JobLink Data

<p><b>Educational Attainment</b></p> <p>High School Graduate 91%</p> <p>Bachelors Degree or higher 57%</p> <p>Graduate/Professional Degree 27%</p>	<p><b>Educational Attainment</b></p> <p>&lt;12 Grade 17%</p> <p>12<sup>th</sup> Grade &amp; GED 46%</p> <p>Bachelors Degree 14%</p>
<p><b>Race</b></p> <p>White 61%</p> <p>Black 22%</p> <p>Hispanic 16%</p> <p><b>Nationality</b></p> <p>American-born 76%</p> <p>Foreign-born, percent 2005-2009 24%</p>	<p><b>Race</b></p> <p>White 9%</p> <p>Black 55%</p> <p>Hispanic 11%</p> <p><b>Nationality</b></p> <p>American 60%</p> <p>Ethiopian 12%</p> <p>59 other nationalities 28%</p>

5



# JobLink Activity FY2011

**Customer Visits** 20,213

(Each log-in for various services)

**Customers Served**

**Resource Room** 2,521

(Self-directed job search, use of computers, Internet, fax, etc.)

**General Public** 886

(Assisted job search. Employment counselor helps with resume, counseling, job leads)

**Alexandria Works!** 478

(Teams assist VIEW customers)

**Subsidized Services** 415

(Training Programs)

**Average Caseload** 1,000

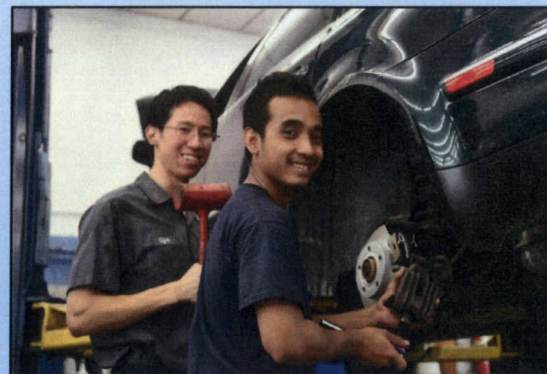
**Jobs Obtained** 394

**Average Wage (F/T)** \$16.90/Hr

**Two WIA Performance Awards** \$35,000

## Special Programs

- **Automotive Training**  
39 enrolled, 29 trained, 14 employed
- **BRAC**  
28 trained, 43 employed
- **CVS Training**  
10 trained, 6 employed
- **Energy Efficiency Block Grant**  
43 enrolled, 32 trained, 13 employed



# TeensWork! Youth Employment Program

**332 Youth Served**

**Public Program**

172 Youth worked in subsidized jobs

43.6% Youth with disabilities

**Private Program**

7

137 Youth served in job search

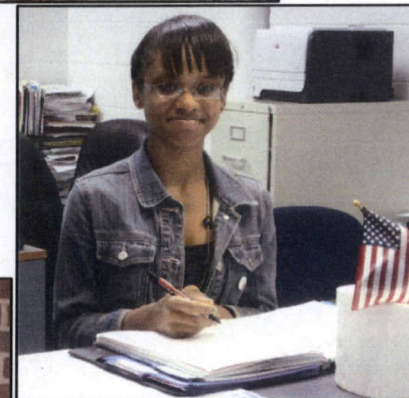
79 Youth placed in private sector

Average wage (private sector) \$9.05/hr

**Other Services**

Job Readiness Workshops

Vocational Assessments





**The Alexandria Works! Coalition Update  
September 2011**

***Alexandria Works!***

*Alexandria Works!* (AW!) is a program created to assist TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) recipients become economically self-sufficient. The AW staff is divided into three teams, comprised of an Eligibility Worker, an Employment Training Specialist, and a Social Worker. The teams provide intensive case management for TANF recipients who are mandated to participate in the Virginia Initiative for Employment not Welfare (VIEW) Program. The teams create service plans to address clients' barriers to employment and assist them in their efforts to secure full-time, permanent jobs.

The services provided by the *Alexandria Works!* Teams include:

- Counseling
- Job search and job readiness training
- Community work experience
- Education and vocational training
- Supportive services, including transportation and child care

The *Alexandria Works!* Teams provided comprehensive services to 280 VIEW clients during the fourth quarter FY 2011 with 216 cases open at the end of the quarter.

- The average full-time wage for clients employed during this quarter was \$9.73; the average part-time wage was \$10.73.
- During the fourth quarter, 48 percent of VIEW clients were employed
- Job retention during the fourth quarter was 82 percent, which continues to be the highest in the Northern Virginia agencies.

*Alexandria Works!* will host a Career Fair October 24 at the First Baptist Church on King St. The event is expected to attract 30 employers and several hundred job seekers. Job search workshops will be held for attendees.



## **Mayor's Youth Initiative**

### ***TeensWork!***

***Teenswork!*** is a youth employment program that offers:

- Job Readiness Workshops and job search assistance for summer and year-round jobs in retail, administration, clerical, care giving, service and labor occupations.
- Vocational Assessments and Career Exploration using computerized tests, videos and one-on-one advising with a Youth Program Counselor.
- Summer Work Experience opportunities in public and non-profit organizations for 14- and 15-year-old City youth who meet eligibility requirements.
- Occupational Skills Training in a variety of career fields for youth who meet eligibility criteria.
- Employment training through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Youth Program. This program is year-round. Participants must be 14 to 21 years old, meet income guidelines and other specific criteria.

For the fourth quarter 2011, the ***TeensWork!*** Youth Employment Program provided the following services.

- 332 youth (14 – 21) served

#### ***Teenswork! Public Program***

- Placed 172 youth in subsidized public and Non-Profit work sites July 11 – Aug 19 (19 additional placements)
- 43.6 percent of Public program participants were youth with disabilities
- The Public Program achieved a 95 percent rate of retention (up 2 percent from 2010)
- Worksites: 35 percent Parks and Recreation, 32 percent Office and Administration, 11 percent Health Care, 12 percent Maintenance/Labor and 10 percent Youth Mappers
- A closing ceremony hosted by Mayor Euille took place at T. C. Williams HS Minnie Howard Campus on August 19. Youth Mappers presented community outreach information.

#### ***Teenswork! Private Program***

- Served 137 youth ages 16 – 21 with job search, placement opportunities and work-related supportive services
- Placed 79 youth in private sector jobs
- Average wage for private sector placements was \$9.05, up 94 cents from last summer
- Challenges that faced youth while seeking jobs this summer: age barrier, lack of experience, lack of specific skills, lack of interviewing skills, difficulty filling out on-line applications, transportation to corporate offices outside beltway.

- What worked: On site recruitments at *JobLink* (small, controlled and specific) and Internet communications with students via webpages and ACPS Blackboard ).
- City employment trends for ***TeensWork!*** participants: Retail 80 percent (national average 21percent ), Leisure & Hospitality 17 percent (national average 26 percent), Education/Healthcare 1 percent (national average 10 percent), Government 1percent (national average 7 percent) and Business 1 percent (national average 7 percent).

### **Office of Employment Training**

The **Office of Employment Training** (OET) provides career assessments, job counseling and job placement assistance. Services include computers with Internet access, job vacancy listings, telephones, fax machines, copiers, resource materials on labor market trends, adaptive equipment for clients with disabilities, and access to skills training programs. OET operates the following programs.

- **Adult Employment Training Program** provides eligible clients with career counseling, assessment, referrals and vouchers for a variety of skills training programs. During the quarter, 36 customers were served with an average hourly wage of \$12.10.
- **Dislocated Worker Program** provides employment training and career counseling specifically for persons affected by layoffs and plant closings in the area. During the quarter, 27 customers were served with an average hourly wage of \$39.58.
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (**SNAPET**) provides job search help, education, skills training and work experience for persons receiving food stamps. During the quarter, 100 customers were served with an average hourly wage of \$10.03.
- **Virginia Refugee Resettlement Program** offers counseling, support services, skills training and English as a Second Language training for refugees. During the quarter, 26 customers were served with an average hourly wage of \$9.78.
- Services for **Persons with Disabilities** include career counseling, assessment, adaptive equipment, and job placement. During the quarter, 74 customers were served with an average hourly wage of \$12.29.
- The **EAGLES** employment program was developed to prepare ex-offenders to find, maintain and advance in employment. During the quarter, 15 customers were served with an average hourly wage of \$9.00.
- The **Community Digital Divide Initiative (CDDI)** provides over 500 online courses which are accessible 24 hours a day, 365 days a year via the Internet.
- The **Automotive Training Program** is an earmark-funded program that ended in August 2011 to train persons in a variety of automotive repair fields. During the quarter, 17 customers were served.
- *JobLink* partners with the Arlington Employment Center and the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership to assist persons working in Alexandria who are impacted by the military's **Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC)** initiative.



There are currently 126 clients (civilian employees of the military) receiving employment and training services. During the quarter, 19 customers were served with an average hourly wage of \$38.99.

OET is partnering with the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities in an effort to increase inter-departmental cooperation and better serve the needs of the communities served by the City's recreation center. *JobLink* will assign one of its Employment Training Specialists (ETS) to each of the four larger recreation centers/regions. The ETS will then develop a year-long series of employment services to be delivered at the center based on the recommendation of the center Advisory Board and the community members. In addition, specific activities like employer recruitment, employment workshops and job fairs will also be presented. It is anticipated that the partnership will be ongoing.

