

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

