



**Human Rights Commission
Meeting Minutes
Regular Meeting
April 16, 2026
City Space, 100 5th Street NE, Charlottesville, VA 22902
6:00 pm**

1. WELCOME

a. CALL TO ORDER

- i. Chair, Heather Roberson-Gaston, called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm

b. ROLL CALL

i. Present

1. Heather Roberson-Gaston, Chair
2. Elizabeth Stark, Vice Chair
3. Dawn Lawson
 - a. Arrived after vote to approve minutes
4. Emily Currier
5. Jayson Whitehead
6. Mariane Asad Doyle
 - a. Arrived after vote to convene in closed session
7. Suzanne Lynn

ii. Absent

1. Callum McCain von Schill
2. Jessica Cocciolone

- c. MISSION (recited by all): *Act as a strong advocate to justice and equal opportunity by providing citywide leadership and guidance in the area of civil rights.*

2. MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC

a. PUBLIC COMMENT

- i. None

b. COMMISSION RESPONSE TO MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC

- i. None

3. MINUTES

- a. Motion to approve minutes from 03/05/2026 HRC Annual Meeting
- i. Motion: Heather Roberson-Gaston
 - ii. Second: Suzanne Lynn
 - iii. Vote

1. In favor: 5
2. Opposed: 0
3. Abstained: 0

iv. Motion passed.

4. BUSINESS MATTERS

a. CHAIR UPDATE

- i. Review of agenda
- ii. Welcome to Deputy City Attorney April Wimberly
- iii. Welcome to prospective Intern Shounak Reza

b. OHR STAFF REPORT

- i. Shounak Reza introduction
- ii. Review of the scope of engagement with Economic Mobility Officer Abi Matthew Wade
 1. Can provide insights and information
 2. Cannot guide policy recommendations
- iii. Policy & Impact Analyst hiring
 1. Position posted
- iv. Legislator attendance at 5/21/26 HRC Regular Meeting
 1. Tentative confirmation from both Sen. Deeds and Del. Callsen
- v. Collaboration with Housing Advisory Committee
 1. Todd will reschedule meeting with Madelyn Metzler
- vi. HRC & OHR CY2025 Annual Report
 1. In progress
 2. Will upload to Council agenda by 5/18
 3. Presentation to Council on 6/15
- vii. Cyber security training
 1. Commissioners should check City email for annual Hox Hunt training
- viii. All employee emails
 1. Todd asked the IT Department about removing Commissioners from all staff emails
 2. Removal is possible but it would remove all announcements including emergency and safety announcements
 3. Commissioners can let Todd know if removal is still wanted

5. CLOSED SESSION

- a. Motion to convene in closed session for the purpose of consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel, specifically, revisions to the City Code pertaining to the Human Rights

Commission and training regarding compliance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, the State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act, and the Virginia Public Records Act

- i. Motion: Heather Roberson-Gaston
- ii. Second: Suzanne Lynn
- iii. Vote
 1. In favor: 6
 2. Opposed: 0
 3. Abstained: 0
- iv. Motion passed.

b. Closed session convened.

c. Motion that the Commission certify, by a recorded vote, that to the best of each Commission member's knowledge only public business matters lawfully exempted from the open meeting requirements of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and identified in the Motion convening the closed session were heard, discussed or considered in the closed session

- i. Motion: Heather Roberson-Gaston
- ii. Second: Elizabeth Stark
- iii. Vote
 1. In favor: 7
 2. Opposed: 0
 3. Abstained: 0
- iv. Motion passed.

6. WORK SESSION

a. Discussion with Abi Matthew Wade, Economic Mobility Officer

- i. See attached presentation and handouts

b. Human Rights Ordinance Amendments

- i. Director reviewed proposed amendments.
- ii. Motion to adopt proposed amendments to the Charlottesville Human Rights Ordinance for recommendation to City Council
 1. Motion: Heather Roberson-Gaston
 2. Second: Suzanne Lynn

a. Vote

- i. In favor: 7
- ii. Opposed: 0
- iii. Abstained: 0

b. Motion passed.

c. HRC Rules & Procedures Amendments

- i. Director reviewed proposed amendments to HRC Rules & Procedures

- ii. Additional changes proposed for alignment with proposed amendments to Charlottesville Human Rights Ordinance
 - iii. Motion to adopt proposed amendments to the Human Rights Commission Rules & Procedures
 - 1. Motion: Heather Roberson Gaston
 - 2. Second: Elizabeth Stark
 - 3. Vote
 - a. In favor: 7
 - b. Opposed: 0
 - c. Abstained: 0
 - 4. Motion passed.
- d. Work Plan check in
 - i. Discussion of expert panel planning and stakeholder identification
 - 1. Commissioner proposes the use of a collaborative document to plan a list of panelists in lieu of the work session on 5/7/26
 - 2. Commissioner suggests expanding beyond the list of panelists from previous years given the focus on economic stability
 - 3. Commissioner suggests talking with experts who are currently addressing immediate problems like housing maintenance in addition to talking about legislative and policy initiatives
 - 4. Commissioner suggests talking with representatives from neighborhood associations
 - 5. Commissioner suggests talking to the City Manager
 - 6. Commissioner suggests talking to RVA Rising
 - 7. Commission will review list of potential invitees at the May regular meeting and send invitations afterward
 - ii. Work Plan updated with actions between April and May meeting
- e. New business
 - i. Discussion regarding the appeal hearing for case 2025-2
 - 1. Next step is to verify whether the panelists have reviewed the report
- f. Confirmation of next Work Session on 5/7/26
 - i. Commission elects not to hold the work session on 5/7/26

7. MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC

- a. PUBLIC COMMENT
 - i. None
- b. COMMISSION RESPONSE TO MATTERS BY THE PUBLIC
 - i. None

8. COMMISSIONER UPDATES

- a. Salvation Army will soon open a family shelter
 - i. They are compiling a waitlist
- b. Tom Tom Festival
 - i. Civic Futures Day is Wednesday
 - 1. Housing sessions
 - 2. Placemaking session regarding the Downtown Mall
 - 3. Discussion about the Innocence Project
 - 4. Mariane is also facilitating a panel regarding non-profits

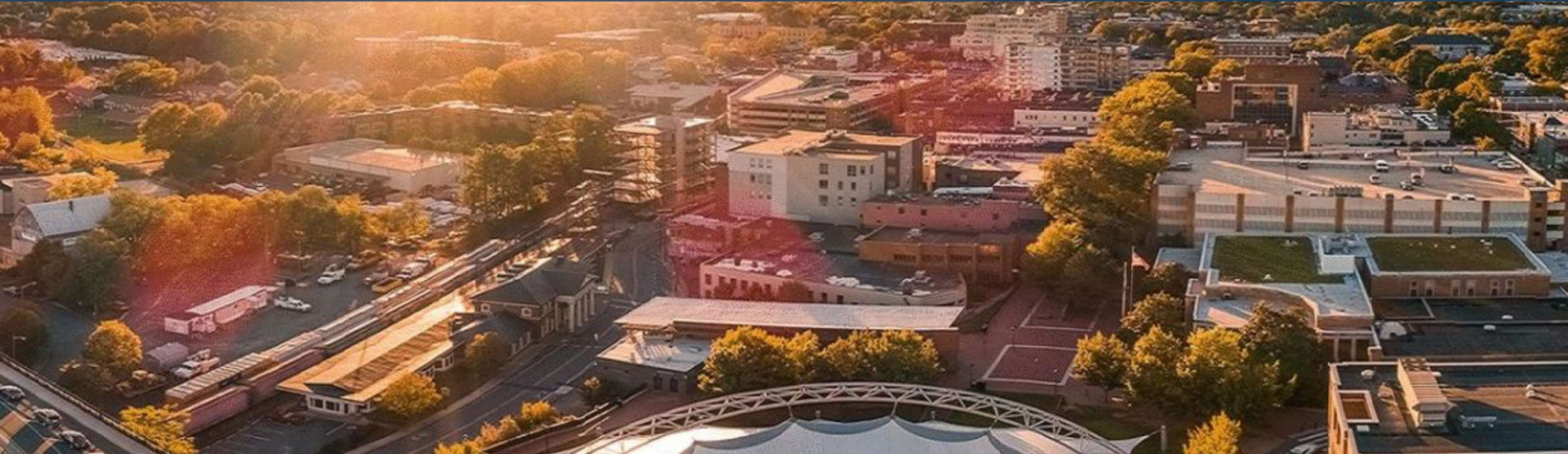
9. NEXT STEPS

- a. **Todd**
 - i. Review HRC Rules & Procedures for recommended amendments to align with changes to the Charlottesville Human Rights Ordinance.
 - ii. Confirm legislator attendance at 5/21/26 HRC Regular Meeting
 - iii. Send list of organizations that Commission proposed meeting with last year
 - iv. Send a check-in email to the public appeal hearing review panel
- b. **Elizabeth**
 - i. Create collaborative document for brainstorming participants for upcoming expert panel in June or July
- c. **Mariane**
 - i. Will reach out to RVA Rising to see if they may be interested in talking to the HRC

10. ADJOURN

- a. Meeting adjourned at 8:53 pm

Charlottesville



Introduction to Economic Mobility and Opportunity Data and Efforts

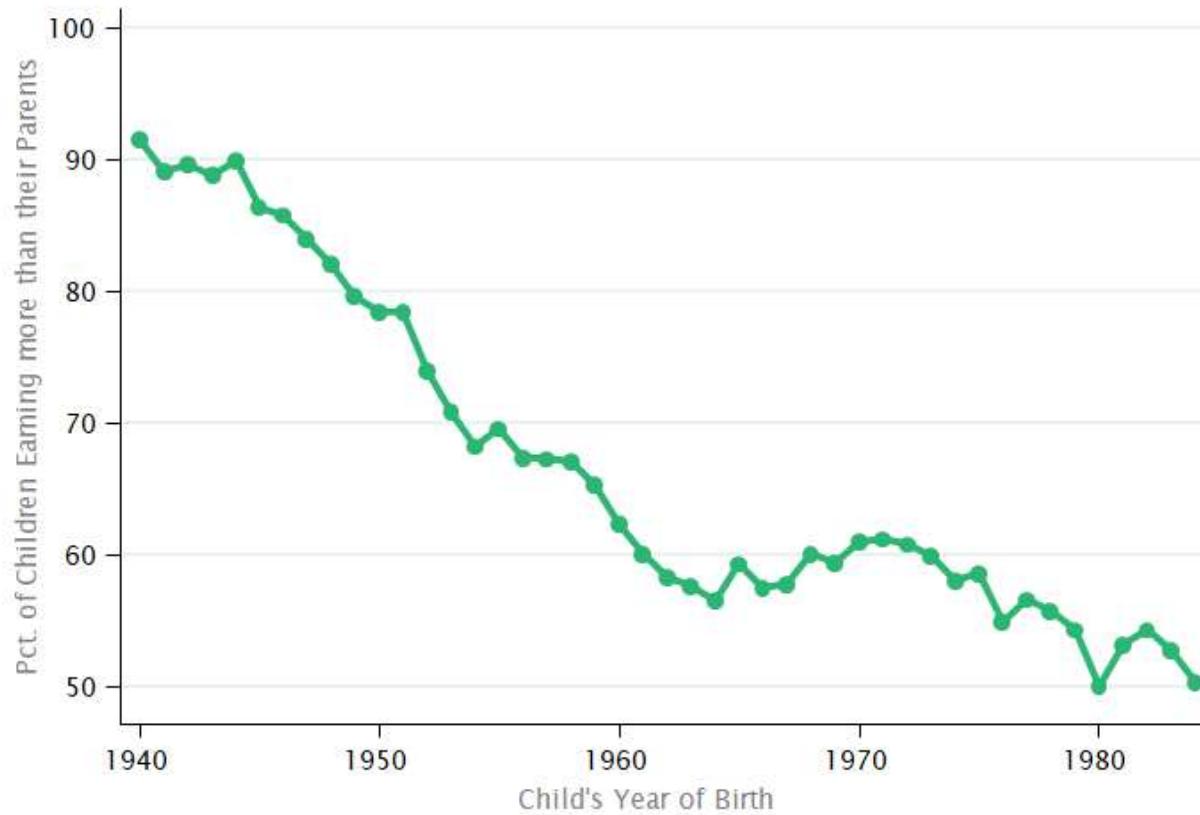
April 16, 2026

Who is your why?

Many of us come to work everyday so that our lives and the lives of our loved ones are better in the short-, medium-, and long-run.



Percent of Children Earning More than Their Parents, by Year of Birth

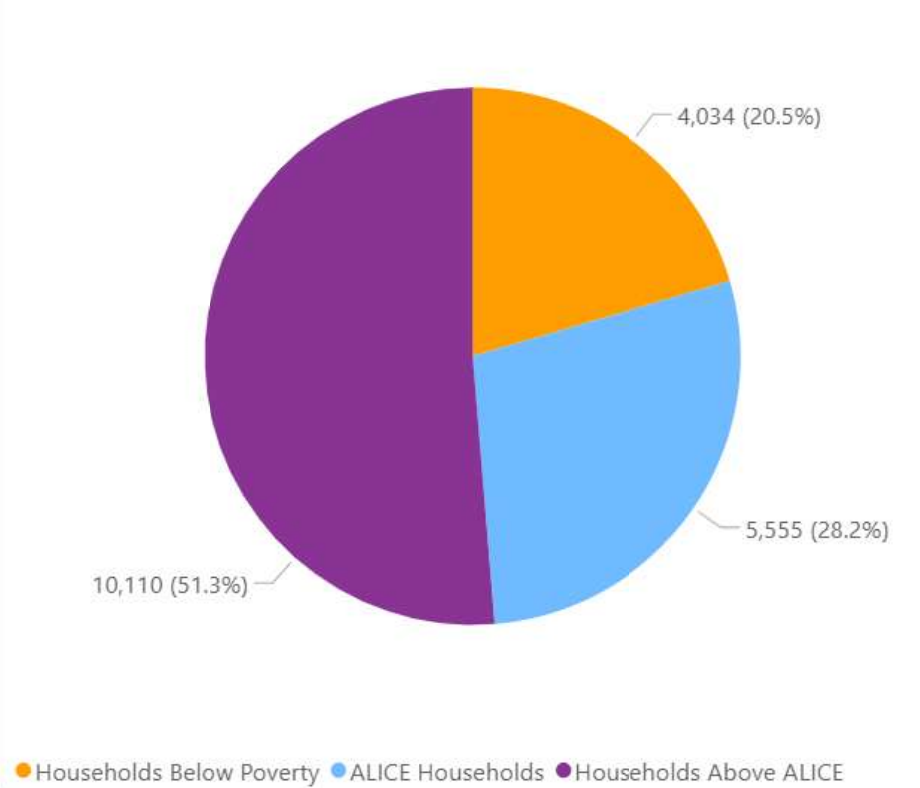


Source: "The American Dream Is Fading," *Opportunity Insights*, April 2, 2018, https://opportunityinsights.org/national_trends/.

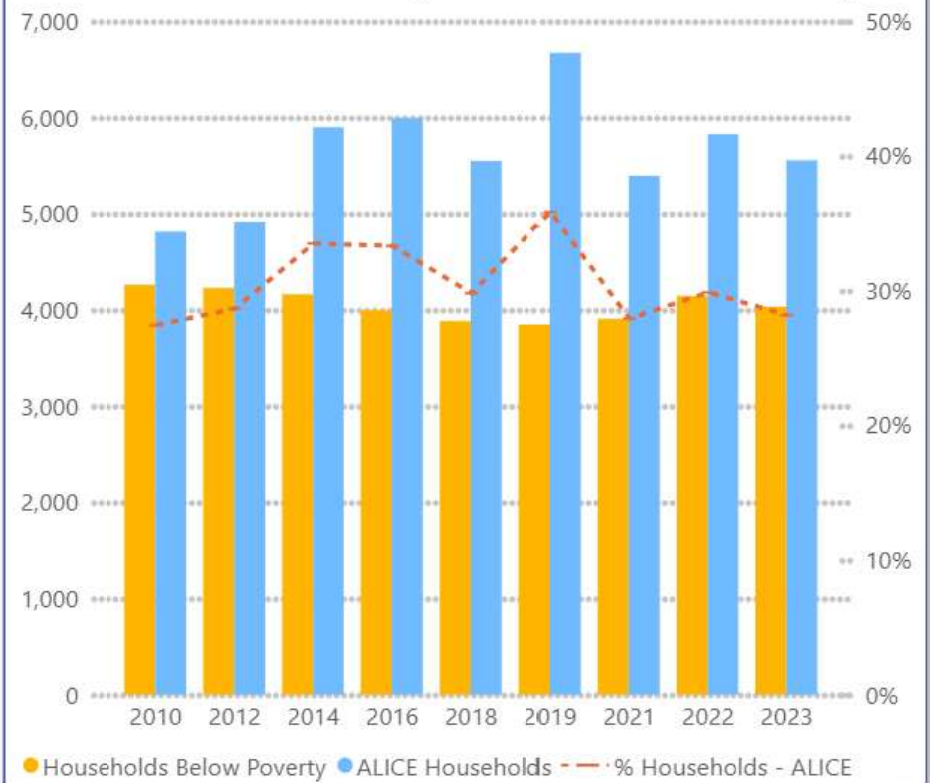
2023 Poverty Level for Family of 4 = \$30,000

ALICE = Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed; income <\$94,644 for a family of 4

Households by Income Group in Locality, 2023



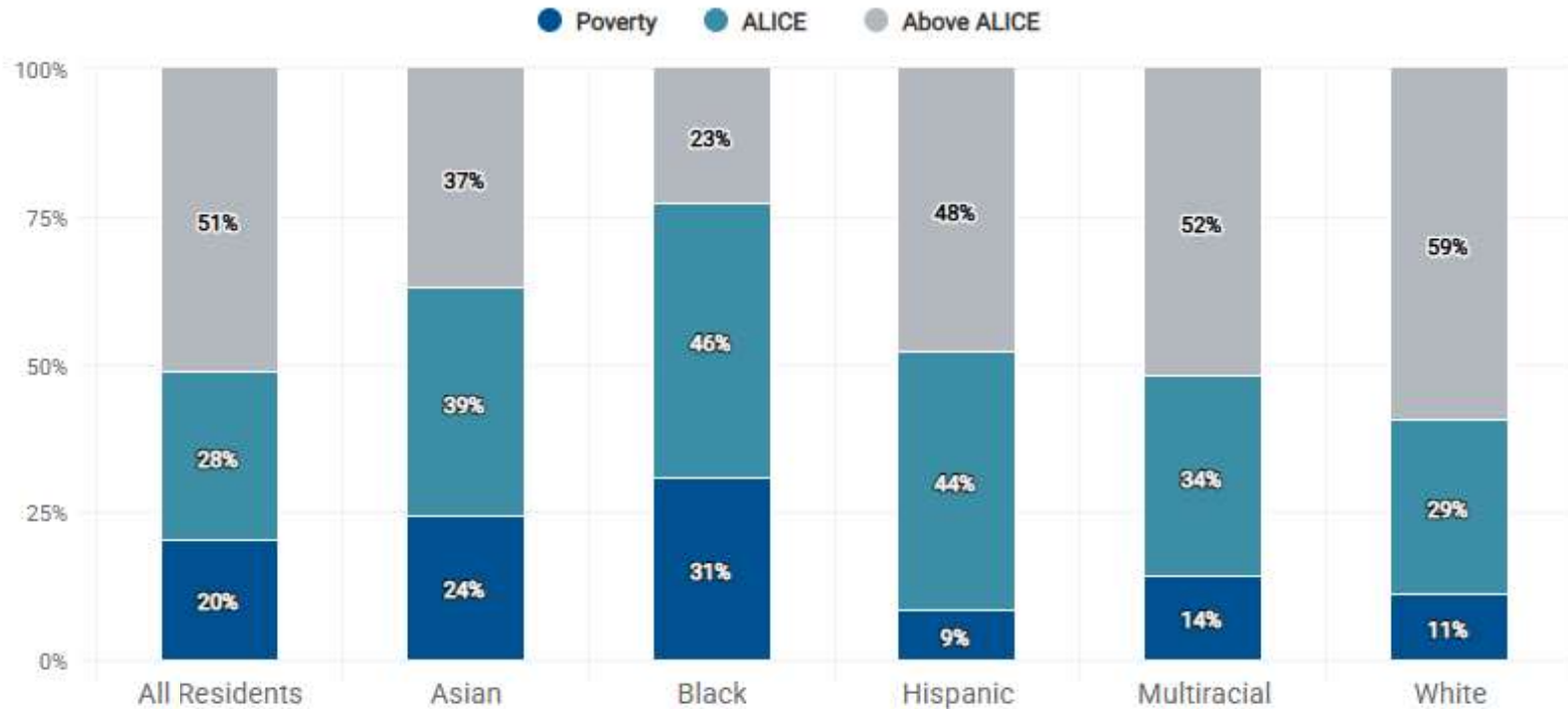
Households Below Poverty & ALICE Households in Locality



Source: Virginia Department of Social Services, "LDSS Annual Profile Report: ALICE Households."

Alice Households by Race/Ethnicity

City of Charlottesville

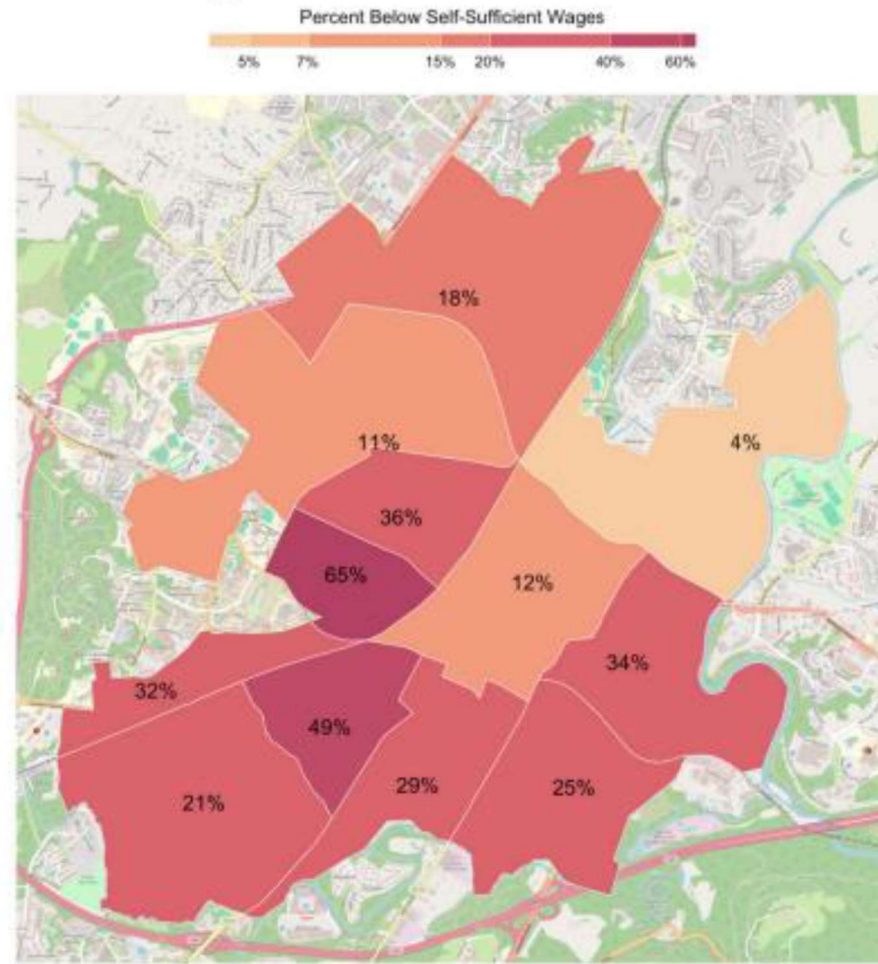


Data Sources: ALICE Threshold, 2023; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2023



Source: UVA Center for Community Partnerships, "Charlottesville Wellbeing Profile."

Families with Income below Self-Sufficiency Charlottesville City



Data Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2018-2022



Source: Mitchell et al., "Orange Dot Report 6.0."

Benefit Cliffs Refresher

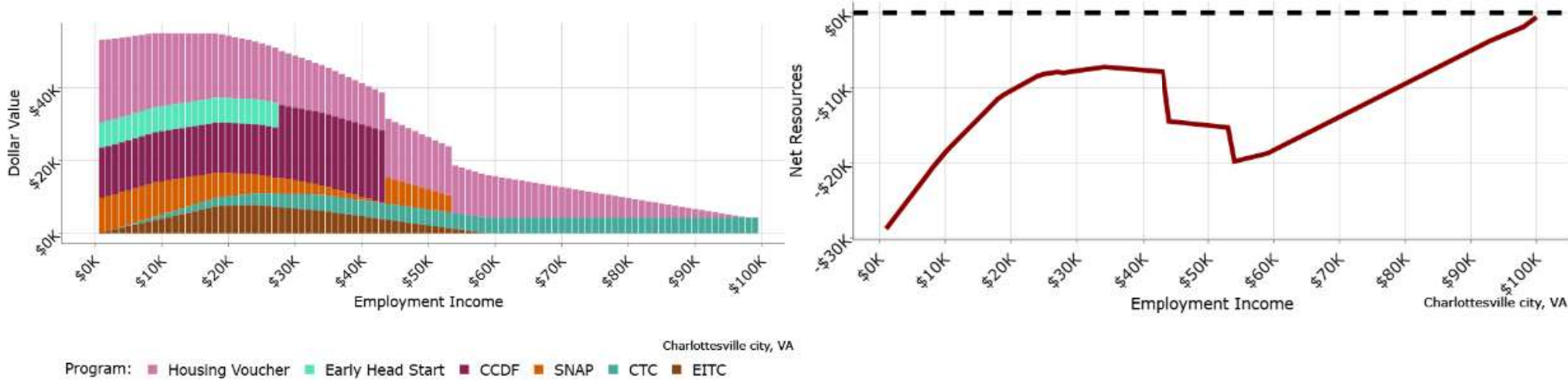
- Effective Marginal Tax Rates (EMTRs) - the proportion of new earnings eroded by a benefit reduction triggered by an increase in income
- High effective marginal tax rates – when most of the earnings increase is offset by lost benefits
- Benefit cliff = EMTR of $\geq 100\%$
- “Benefit cliff” is often also used to refer to high marginal tax rates that may not exceed 100% but are still very impactful.



Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, “Effective Marginal Tax Rates/Benefit Cliffs.”

Benefit Cliffs in Charlottesville

Calculated for initial eligibility; from Atlanta Fed’s CLIFF Policy Rules Dashboard, for a single parent household with two children (ages 2 and 7)



$$\text{Net Resources} = (\text{Earnings} + \text{Benefit}) - (\text{Expenses} + \text{Taxes})$$



Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, “Benefit Cliffs Across the U.S. Policy Rules Database.”

Connections Between Benefit Cliffs and ALICE

- Many ALICE households are or have experienced benefit cliffs
- The phase out range for many means-tested benefit programs is far below the Charlottesville ALICE threshold, often with a \$10,000-30,000 gap in between
- Households struggling to thrive: 20% of Charlottesville households are at or below the poverty threshold, and another 28% are below the ALICE threshold



What are the aims of Economic Mobility and Opportunity (EMO)?

Meeting basic needs

Stable housing and livable income

Saving and planning for your own and your family's future



Upward Mobility Framework



Source: Urban Institute Upward Mobility Framework, <https://upward-mobility.urban.org/framework>



Charlottesville's EMO Work

- ICMA-administered grant for a total of 30 months (till June 2028)
- Key deliverable of EMO work in next year: **an action plan**
 - Co-designed with residents, particularly from communities which have historically experienced the least upward mobility
 - Coordinating across internal City departments and offices
 - Building partnerships with regional governments, non-profits, and community-based organizations
- The Economic Mobility Officer is the backbone support and coordinator of this cross-cutting work, out of the City Manager's Office



What's In the Works and What's Coming Up

- Launched interdepartmental working group
 - Exploring focus areas, priorities, and levers through interdepartmental coordination
- Upcoming event: Economic Mobility and Opportunity Community Data and Dialogue Event with UVA Center for Community Partnerships
 - May 7, Carver Recreation Center, 5:30-7:30 pm
 - Exploring questions to build shared understanding
 - What does economic mobility and opportunity look like in Charlottesville today?
 - How do we define economic thriving as a community?
- Building a website and EMO dashboard
- [Community Co-design Studios](#) later this summer



EMO and Benefit Cliffs Resources



Thank you!

Charlottesville



References

Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. “Benefit Cliffs Across the U.S. Policy Rules Database.” Accessed April 16, 2026. https://emar-data-tools.shinyapps.io/prd_dashboard/.

Fu, Samantha, Annie Heinrichs, Kiersten Vaughan, Emma Fernandez, and Joe Schilling. “Toolkit for Increasing Upward Mobility in Your Community.” Urban Institute, April 29, 2025. <https://upward-mobility.urban.org/toolkit-increasing-upward-mobility>.

Mitchell, Elizabeth, Michele Claibourn, and Ridge Schuyler. “Orange Dot Report 6.0.” Charlottesville Data Resource Hub, UVA Center for Community Partnerships, October 21, 2024. <https://communitypartnerships.github.io/data-resources/reports/orange-dot-6.html>.

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. “Effective Marginal Tax Rates/Benefit Cliffs.” HHS Office of Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. Accessed April 16, 2026. <http://aspe.hhs.gov/topics/poverty-economic-mobility/marginal-tax-rate-series>.

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Virginia Department of Social Services. “LDSS Annual Profile Report: ALICE Households.” Accessed March 12, 2026. <https://app.powerbigov.us/view?r=eyJrIjoieYjhmODU2ZTYtZTc0Zi00ZTE1LWUwYmEtZjNjODQ2ODNkMTQ4IiwidCI6ImYyMGFINWE5LTRIYzEtNGZhMC04NjQxLTVkOWYzODZjNzMwOSJ9>.



Economic Mobility and Opportunity Resources and Data

DISCLAIMER: Some links lead to websites that are not operated by the City of Charlottesville. The City of Charlottesville does not control these websites nor do we review or control their content. The City of Charlottesville provides these links to users for convenience. The linkage does not imply an endorsement of products, services, or information, and does not imply an association between the City of Charlottesville and the operators of the linked website.

General EMO Resources

[ICMA Economic Mobility and Opportunity Tools and Resources](#)

[National League of Cities Equitable Economic Mobility Initiative](#)

[NACo Economic Mobility Resource Hub](#)

[National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership](#)

[National Conference of State Legislatures Economic Security and Mobility Toolkit](#)

[United Way's United for ALICE](#)

[Urban Institute's Including Disabled People in Upward Mobility: Leveraging Local Data](#)

Regional EMO Data, Tools, and Dashboards

Note: some will report Charlottesville city as an individual "county" and at the census tract level; others may lump Charlottesville into Albemarle, or report data for the MSA or the TJPDC)

[Urban Institute's Upward Mobility Data Dashboard](#)

[Opportunity Insights' Opportunity Atlas](#)

[United for ALICE Budget and Income Status Tool](#)

[United for ALICE County Reports \(can drill down to Charlottesville City\)](#)

[United for ALICE Mapping Financial Hardship](#)

[United for ALICE Wage Tool](#)

[MIT Living Wage Calculator](#)

[University of Washington Center for Women's Welfare Self-Sufficiency Standard](#)

[Distressed Communities Index](#)

[Neighborhood Atlas and Area Deprivation Index](#)

[New Growth Innovation Network](#)

[Urban Institute's Debt in America: An Interactive Map](#)

[Urban Institute's Affordability Tracker](#)

Catalogues of Economic Mobility Research and Strategies

[Results for America Economic Mobility Catalog](#)

[United for ALICE Economic Viability Dashboard](#)

Benefit Cliff Research and Resources

[Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta CLIFF Tools](#)

[CLIFF Portal](#)

[Career Ladder Identifier and Financial Forecaster](#)

[Benefit Cliffs Across the U.S. Policy Rules Database](#)

[National Conference of State Legislatures Benefits Cliffs Resources](#)

[APHSA Benefits Cliffs Dashboard](#)

[HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation Effective Marginal Tax Rates/Benefit Cliffs Research](#)

Child Care Resources

[Child Care Deserts Tool](#)

[Virginia Early Childhood Foundation Ready Region ECCE Supply/Demand Data](#)

[Child Care Aware Charlottesville Child Care Needs Assessment](#)

[United Way Partnering with City of Charlottesville for National League of Cities Funding](#)

[Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta: What Can Be Done about the Childcare Benefits Cliff? A Case Study in Florida](#)

EMO Communities of Practice and Opportunity for Connection

[National League of Cities Economic Mobility Peer Network \(EMPN\)](#)

[NACo Counties for Economic Mobility](#)

[Small and Midsized Cities Hub](#)

[Government Alliance on Race & Equity Community Discussions and Topic Guides](#)

[ICMA 2026 National Economic Mobility and Opportunity Conference \(August 19-21, 2026\)](#)

Racial equity is necessary for all people and communities to prosper, especially those who have been excluded by structural inequities.

THREE-PART DEFINITION OF UPWARD MOBILITY

Dignity & Belonging

Economic Success

Power & Autonomy

PILLARS



Rewarding Work



High-Quality Education



Opportunity-Rich & Inclusive Neighborhoods



Healthy Environment & Access to Good Health Care



Responsive & Just Governance

PREDICTORS

- ▶ Employment opportunities
- ▶ Jobs paying living wages
- ▶ Opportunities for income
- ▶ Financial security
- ▶ Wealth-building opportunities

- ▶ Access to preschool
- ▶ Effective public education
- ▶ School economic diversity
- ▶ Preparation for college
- ▶ Digital access

- ▶ Housing affordability
- ▶ Housing stability
- ▶ Economic inclusion
- ▶ Racial diversity
- ▶ Social capital
- ▶ Transportation access

- ▶ Access to health services
- ▶ Neonatal health
- ▶ Environmental quality
- ▶ Safety from trauma

- ▶ Political participation
- ▶ Descriptive representation
- ▶ Safety from crime
- ▶ Just policing

Source: "Upward Mobility Framework," Urban Institute Upward Mobility Initiative, <https://upward-mobility.urban.org/framework>.

The Cost of Basics Outpaces Wages

The Household Survival Budget reflects the minimum cost to live and work in the current economy and includes housing, child care, food, transportation, health care, technology, and taxes. It does not include savings for emergencies or future goals like college or retirement. In 2023, household costs in every county in Virginia were well above the Federal Poverty Level of \$14,580 for a single adult and \$30,000 for a family of four.

Household Survival Budget, Charlottesville City, Virginia, 2023								
Monthly Costs	Single Adult	One Adult, One Child	One Adult, One In Child Care	Two Adults	Two Adults Two Children	Two Adults, Two In Child Care	Single Adult 65+	Two Adults 65+
Housing	\$1,364	\$1,392	\$1,392	\$1,392	\$1,654	\$1,654	\$1,364	\$1,392
Child Care	\$0	\$414	\$1,104	\$0	\$828	\$2,208	\$0	\$0
Food	\$644	\$1,089	\$977	\$1,181	\$1,980	\$1,748	\$592	\$1,086
Transportation	\$418	\$552	\$552	\$657	\$945	\$945	\$347	\$517
Health Care	\$199	\$439	\$439	\$439	\$820	\$820	\$521	\$1,042
Technology	\$86	\$86	\$86	\$116	\$116	\$116	\$86	\$116
Miscellaneous	\$271	\$397	\$455	\$379	\$634	\$749	\$291	\$415
Taxes	\$536	\$590	\$751	\$637	\$910	\$1,230	\$592	\$939
Monthly Total	\$3,518	\$4,959	\$5,756	\$4,801	\$7,887	\$9,470	\$3,793	\$5,507
ANNUAL TOTAL	\$42,216	\$59,508	\$69,072	\$57,612	\$94,644	\$113,640	\$45,516	\$66,084
Hourly Wage	\$21.11	\$29.75	\$34.54	\$28.81	\$47.32	\$56.82	\$22.76	\$33.04