HPI SCORE	
88	
TRACT	
1015.00	

HPI SCORE	
41	
TRACT	
1022.00	

EAST FALLS CHURCH

VIRGINIA SQUARE

CLARENDON

BUCKINGHAM

COLOMBIA HEIGHTS

CRYSTAL CITY

HPI SCORE	
86	
TRACT	
1014.02	

HPI SCORE	
45	
TRACT	
1020.01	

HPI SCORE	
47	
TRACT	
1027.01	

Healthy Places Index Score

- Highly Favorable 80.4–87.9
- Favorable 76.3–80.3
- Intermediate 68.6–76.2
- Unfavorable 59.6–68.5
- Highly Unfavorable 41.1–59.5
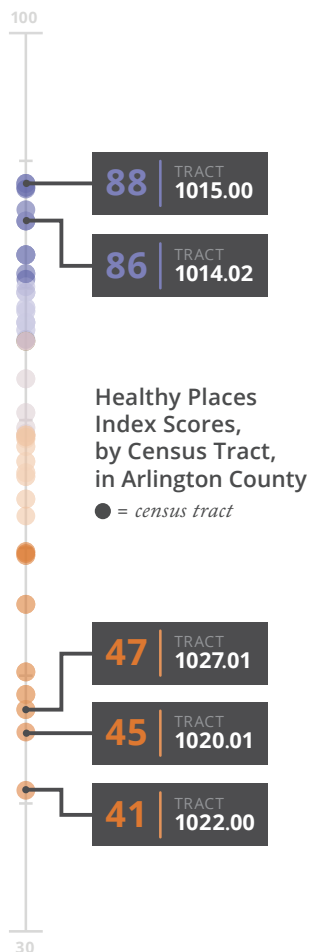- No Data Available

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Miles

ARLINGTON COUNTY

At first glance, Arlington County is a healthy place to live. It ranks among the healthiest counties in the nation, but closer examination reveals wide variation in health across neighborhoods and census tracts. For example, life expectancy — how long a newborn is expected to live — varies by 10 years, depending on where in Arlington County a child is born. Other health measures also vary greatly.

Health itself, and the inequities in health we see across Arlington County, are about more than health care. Health is shaped by education, economic and other household resources, housing, transportation, and our environment — both physical (e.g., parks) and social (e.g., racial discrimination).
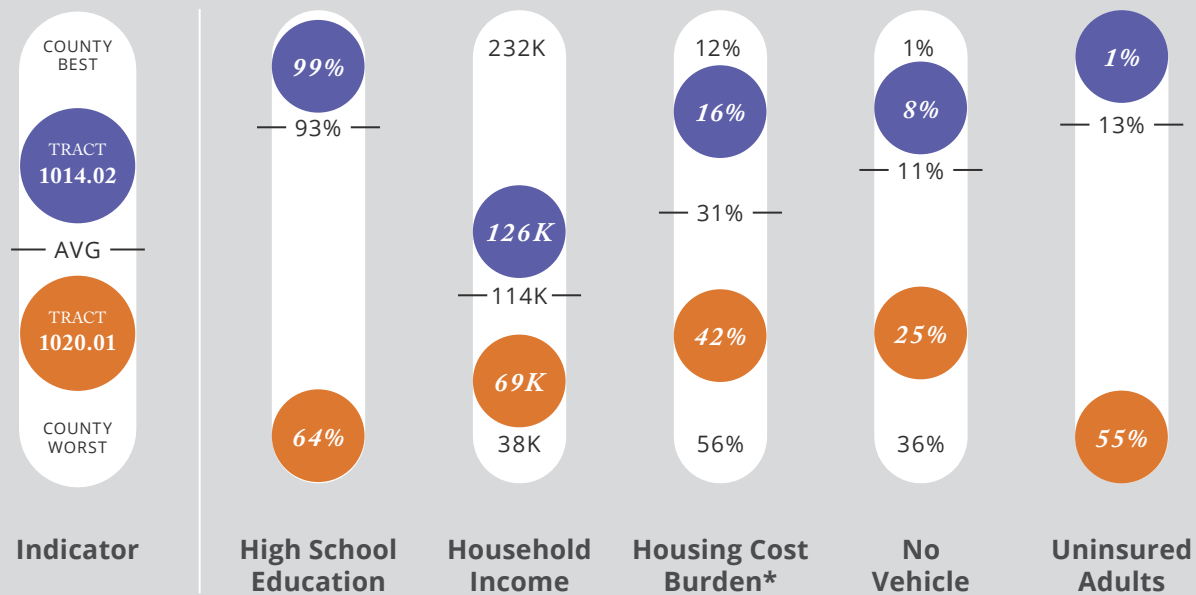
At the request of the Northern Virginia Health Foundation and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, the Center on Society and Health at Virginia Commonwealth University developed a new tool, called the Healthy Places Index (HPI), to provide the public a convenient way to measure the health of neighborhoods in Northern Virginia. The HPI uses data on dozens of indicators, taken from each of the census tracts, to predict the health of communities. The advanced statistical computations used to produce the HPI yielded a stunning finding — education and economic resources accounted for 60% of the variation in life expectancy we see across the region. Housing and transportation explained 26%, and health care accounted for only 6%.

The HPI measures the health of every census tract on a scale of 0–100; high numbers represent the best conditions. As with life expectancy, HPI scores

100

88	TRACT 1015.00

86	TRACT 1014.02

Healthy Places Index Scores, by Census Tract, in Arlington County

● = census tract

47	TRACT 1027.01

45	TRACT 1020.01

41	TRACT 1022.00

30

Gaps in Opportunity in Arlington County

Indicators depict how greatly living conditions vary across Arlington County. Residents of tract 1014.02 (HPI 86) enjoy more favorable conditions for health than those living in tract 1020.01 (HPI 45).

Indicator	High School Education	Household Income	Housing Cost Burden*	No Vehicle	Uninsured Adults
COUNTY BEST	99%	232K	12%	1%	1%
TRACT 1014.02	93%	126K	16%	8%	13%
AVG	64%	114K	31%	11%	55%
TRACT 1020.01		69K	42%	25%	
COUNTY WORST	64%	38K	56%	36%	55%

Above: *Outcomes in tracts 1014.02 (in Virginia Square) and 1020.01 (in Buckingham) compared to the top, bottom, and average results for Arlington County*

*Housing cost burden: 30% or more of income spent on housing costs

vary greatly across Arlington County, from a low of 41 in census tract 1022.00 in Columbia Heights to a high of 88 in tract 1015.00 near Clarendon.

The differences in living conditions in places with high versus low HPI scores can be stark and often exist only a few miles apart. For example, in census tract 1014.02 in Virginia Square, where the HPI is 86, residents have more education, income, and other resources for good health than do residents just one mile away in tract 1020.01 in Buckingham, where the HPI is 45. In that Buckingham tract, only 64% of adults have completed high school, and 43% of households have incomes below 200% of the poverty level.

People of color are often disproportionately exposed to poor living conditions that affect their health. For example, in census tract 1027.01 near Barcroft Park, where the HPI is only 47, 22% of residents are African American, 39% are Hispanic, and 69% are recent immigrants (2000 or later).

Closing the gaps in Arlington County—in health and opportunity—requires policies and investments to improve education, income, and the economic vitality of communities. It will also require a recognition of the institutional inequities that created many of these conditions—and that persist today. These investments will improve health while also strengthening the local economy, civic wellbeing, and regional growth. Access to health care is also important, but meaningful improvements in health require attention to living conditions.

Policymakers in local government, the business community, real estate developers, and community leaders are among the stakeholders who can change these conditions. The benefits extend beyond those most in need. Everyone in Arlington County gains from improvements in health and economic wellbeing.

To see data for all census tracts in Arlington County, please visit our interactive map at https://novahealthfdn.org/interactive-map-opportunity

Northern Virginia Health Foundation

Center on Society and Health