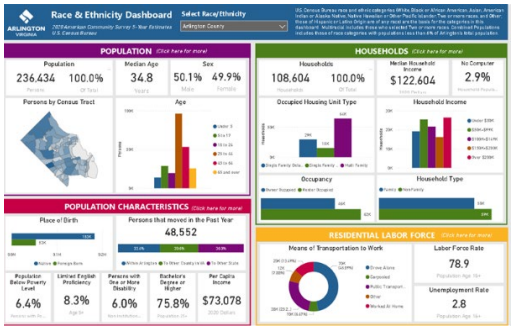
Race and Ethnicity Dashboard Five-Year Review

2019 ACS & 2024 ACS

In just five years, Arlington has experienced demographic, economic and social shifts that intersect across race and ethnicity, resulting in widening income gaps, shifting poverty rates, evolving educational attainment, rapid gains in digital access, and pandemic-driven changes to work commutes. These indicators show a county that is becoming more diverse and more digitally connected yet still marked by structural disparities that shape residents' economic mobility, daily life, and long-term opportunities.



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Introduction

Arlington's Race and Ethnicity Dashboard was first released in 2021 as a tool to track key demographic indicators by race and ethnicity. Using U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) Estimates, the Dashboard serves as an equity-focused lens to help identify socioeconomic disparities across the county, furthering Arlington's commitment to its 2019 Equity Resolution.

This report is the third in a series of briefing reports that examine key equity lens questions: who benefits? who is burdened? who is missing? how do we know? and what do/did we do? The first report, *Introducing Arlington's Race and Ethnicity Dashboard*, was released alongside the dashboard's initial launch in 2021. It was followed by the 2022 briefing report, which highlighted the addition of enhanced time-series data in the second release.

Now, five years after its initial release, we take this opportunity to evaluate key indicators, gaining insight into the Arlington community's progress and identifying areas for further improvement. Future reports will be released on a 5-year schedule.

For the purposes of this report, several race and ethnicity categories have been shortened for readability. Black and African American is referred to as Black, Multiracial and Combined Populations is referred to as Multiracial, and Hispanic or Latino Origin is referred to as Hispanic or Hispanic Origin.

The Race and Ethnicity Dashboard relies on the U.S. Census Bureau data which is guided by 1997 Office of Management and business (OMB) standards to categorize race and ethnic categories as follows: White, Black or African American, Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Two or more races, Some Other Race, and those of Hispanic or Latino Origin that are of any race.

Because Arlington's counts for American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Two or More Races, and Some Other Race were too small to report individually, these groups were combined into a single Multiracial and Combined Populations category.

For more information from the U.S. Census Bureau on race visit: www.census.gov/topics/population/race.html

Race and Ethnicity

According to the 2024 ACS, the white population accounts for 60.4% of Arlington's population, while persons of color (POC) make up 39.6% of the population. Since 2019, the data seems to indicate a sharp decrease in the white population alongside noticeable growth in the Multiracial population. However, much of this apparent shift is driven by improvements to the ACS race question introduced in 2020, and not solely by demographic change.[1] This more inclusive question has resulted in people who once identified themselves as white to now identify themselves in a more nuanced way that results in a classifying of Multiracial.

In addition to the multiracial population increase, those who identify as Black, Asian or Hispanic all experienced population growth. The Black population saw the largest growth rate at 4.5%, followed by Asian at 4.0% and Hispanic at 3.3%.

Figure 1: Arlington Population (2019 ACS and 2024 ACS)

	2019 ACS		2024 ACS		Change	
Arlington County	233,464	100.0%	236,254	100.0%	2,790	1.2%
White	166,912	71.5%	142,640	60.4%	(24,272)	-14.5%
Black	21,360	9.1%	22,327	9.5%	967	4.5%
Asian	23,959	10.3%	24,923	10.5%	964	4.0%
Multiracial	21,233	9.1%	46,364	19.6%	25,131	118.4%
Hispanic (Any Race)	36,375	15.6%	37,572	15.9%	1,197	3.3%

[1]https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/guidance/comparing-acs-data/2024.html#accordion-57e614501b-item-0fd652d267

Age

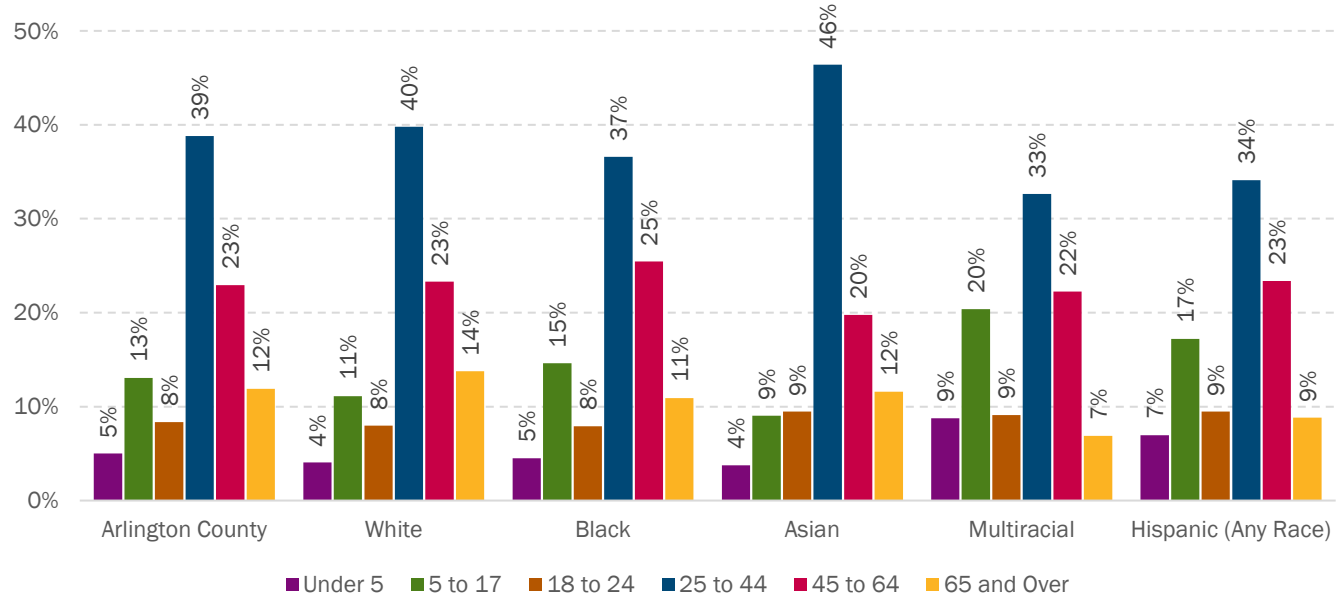
Arlington's age demographics have shifted noticeably over the past decade, reflecting trends seen at the state and national levels. The number of children under age 5 has declined, reflecting a lower birth rate, while the population age 65 and older has grown as the baby-boomer generation ages. These patterns appear across all racial groups.

Figure 2: Arlington Population by Age Groups (2019 ACS and 2024 ACS)

	2019 ACS		2024 ACS		Change	
Arlington County	233,464	100%	236,254	100%	2,790	1%
Under 5	13,874	6%	11,805	5%	(2,069)	-15%
5 to 17	27,693	12%	30,796	13%	3,103	11%
18 to 24	18,918	8%	19,713	8%	795	4%
25 to 44	96,131	41%	91,642	39%	(4,489)	-5%
45 to 64	52,383	22%	54,175	23%	1,792	3%
65 and Over	24,465	10%	28,123	12%	3,658	15%

Adults ages 25 to 44 remain the largest segment of Arlington's population at 39%, and this trend is even more pronounced among Asian residents, for whom this age group makes up 46%. However, the Asian population shows a distinct drop-off in the next age bracket: only 20% fall within ages 45 to 64, the lowest share among all racial categories. This suggests that many Asian residents leave Arlington as they reach midlife.

Figure 3: Race and Ethnicity by Age Group (2024 ACS)

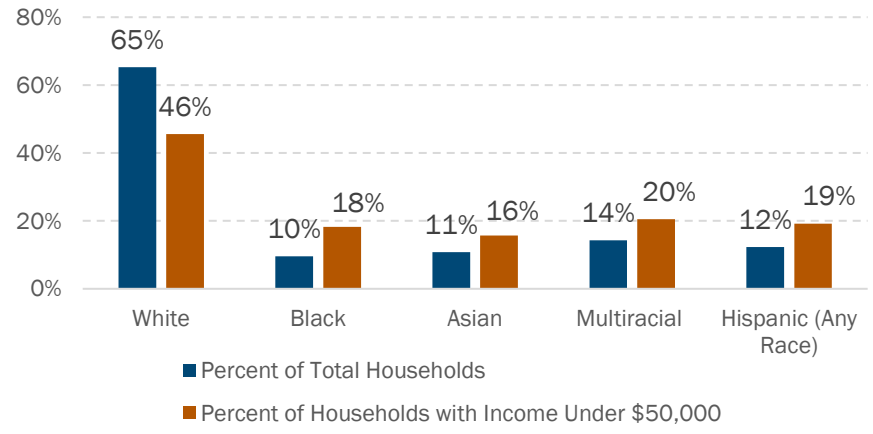


Income

Household Income

Household income estimates continue to show meaningful economic disparities among Arlington residents. Households of color are underrepresented at higher income levels, while white households are underrepresented at lower income levels. Only 46% of white households have incomes below $50,000, compared to 65% of all Arlington households overall, underscoring the income gap across racial groups.

Figure 4: Household Income Under $50,000 (2024 ACS)



The most notable shift from 2019 to 2024 among households earning under $50,000 is the decline in white households and the corresponding increase in Multiracial households. This suggests that some residents who were previously classified as white are now identifying as Multiracial, and that a significant portion of this reclassified group falls within lower-income ranges. Among other racial groups, Asian households in this income bracket rose from 14% to 16%, while Black households declined from 21% to 18%.

Figure 5: Household Income Under $50,000 (2019 ACS and 2024 ACS)

	Households		Under $50,000	
	2019 ACS	2024 ACS	2019 ACS	2024 ACS
Total Households	107,032	112,027	18,688	17,619
White	75%	65%	56%	46%
Black	9%	10%	21%	18%
Asian	10%	11%	14%	16%
Multiracial	6%	14%	10%	20%
Hispanic (Any Race)	12%	12%	19%	19%

Income Defined

The ACS defines income as money received on a regular basis prior to taxes, social security and union dues.

Sources include:

- ✓ Wages
- ✓ Salaries
- ✓ Commission
- ✓ Tips
- ✓ Self-Employment
- ✓ Investment income
- ✓ Retirement and Social Security
- ✓ Public Assistance and Transfers

Sources do **NOT** include:

- ✗ Food Stamps
- ✗ Food Assistance
- ✗ Subsidized housing
- ✗ Medicaid/Medicare
- ✗ Capital Gains
- ✗ Goods produced and consumed on a farm

For more information from the U.S. Census Bureau on income visit: www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/income.html

Median Household Income

The median household income in Arlington is $142,114 (2024 dollars); however, after adjusting for inflation, it is about 4% lower than it was five years ago. Income levels vary sharply across racial and ethnic categories. White households have the highest median income at $162,762. Asian households follow at $119,024, which is 73% of earnings of white households.

Larger income gaps persist for Black, Multiracial, and Hispanic households. Although Black households saw a 24% increase in median income over the past five years, a substantial disparity remains when compared to white households. Individually, both Black and Hispanic households earn only about 58% of the white median income, while Multiracial households have the lowest relative income at just 55% of the white median.

Figure 6: Median Household Income (2019 ACS and 2024 ACS)

	2019 ACS in 2024 Dollars	2024 ACS in 2024 Dollars
Arlington County	$147,772	$142,114
White	$162,476	$162,762
Black	$76,363	$94,758
Asian	$120,938	$119,024
Multiracial	$95,387	$89,910
Hispanic (Any Race)	$99,030	$94,375

Inflation

To accurately compare income over time, it must be adjusted to account for changes in the cost of living. The U. S. Census Bureau uses the Consumer Price Index Research Retroactive Series (R-CPI-U-RS) produced by the Bureau of Labor Statistics to adjust prior year and historical income estimates from the ACS.

Inflation between 2019 and 2024 was 23.1%. That means to compare 2019 to 2024 income, the 2019 income estimates need to be adjusted by 23.1% as follows:

2019 ACS Median Household Income in 2019 Dollars = $120,071
x 1.231 (inflation rate)
$147,772 (2024 Dollars)

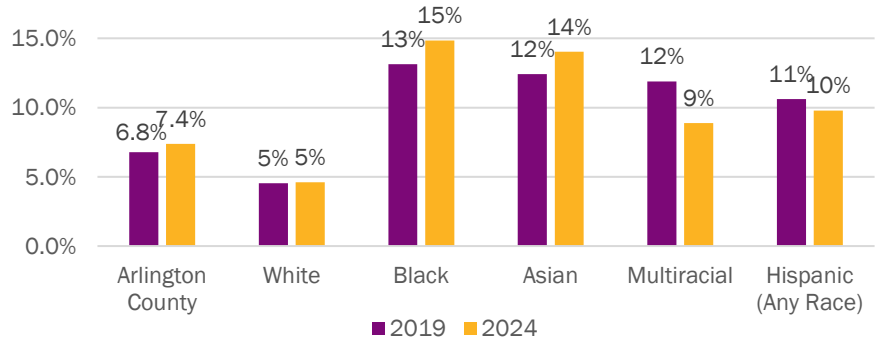
For more information on the use and application of inflation visit:
www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/income/guidance/current-vs-constant-dollars.html

Poverty

In 2024 dollars, the Federal poverty threshold for a family of four is approximately $32,000. According to the 2024 ACS, 7.4% of Arlington residents live below the poverty level – up from 6.8% in 2019.

While the percentage of the white population living below the poverty level stayed constant at 5%, the Multiracial and Hispanic population experienced a decline in the poverty rate. However, both the Black and Asian populations showed noticeable increases and now have poverty rates more than three times higher than the white population.

Figure 7: Persons Below Poverty (2019 ACS and 2024 ACS)



Education

Arlington ranks the top county in the nation for educational attainment of residents, with 77% of residents aged 25 years or older holding a bachelor's degree or higher. Among all racial and ethnic categories, the white population has the highest percentage of those with at least a bachelor's degree at 87%.

Since 2019, nearly all racial groups have seen an increase in the share of residents with a bachelor's degree or higher. The only exception is the Asian population, which experienced a slight decline from 78% in 2019 to 77% in 2024. Overall, educational attainment across Arlington either remained stable or showed a notable increase over the past five years.

Figure 8: Bachelor's Degree or Higher (2019 ACS and 2024 ACS)

	Population Age 25+		Bachelor's Degree or Higher	
	2019 ACS	2024 ACS	2019 ACS	2024 ACS
Arlington County	172,979	173,940	75%	77%
White	126,334	109,647	82%	87%
Black	15,557	16,290	47%	54%
Asian	18,291	19,375	78%	77%
Multiracial	12,797	28,628	43%	54%
Hispanic (Any Race)	23,965	24,921	43%	48%

Poverty Defined

The U.S. Census Bureau uses income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine poverty as set forth by the OMB's Directive 14.

A family or individual living alone is considered in poverty when their total income falls below the relevant poverty threshold.

2024 Poverty Thresholds by Family Size (Weighted Average)

One Person (unrelated individual)
- Under 65 years.....$16,320
- 65 years and over..... $15,050

Two People
- Under 65 years*..... $21,100
- 65 years and over*.....$18,980

Three People..... $24,950

Four People..... $32,130

Five People..... $38,110

Six People..... $43,130

Seven People..... $48,970

Eight People..... $54,740

Nine + People.....$64,900

*Householder

For poverty thresholds by size of family and number of related children visit: www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-poverty-thresholds.html

Digital Access

A very small share of Arlington's household population lacks access to a computing device (such as a desktop or laptop computer, smartphone, tablet, or other portable wireless device[2]). Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 3.5% of the household population lacked access to a computing device with higher rates among persons of color, especially those who identified as Black (7.4%), Multiracial (7.3%), and Hispanic (7.8%).

The COVID-19 pandemic was an inflection point during which daily life shifted dramatically and digital tools became essential. Adoption of digital technology occurred across the County with the rate of Arlington residents without access to a computing device dropping to 1.1% in 2024. The Asian population has the lowest rate of limited access at 0.5%, followed by the white population at 0.9%. Rates remain higher among residents who are Black (1.9%), Multiracial (1.6%), and Hispanic (1.8%).

Figure 9: Without Access to Computing Device (2019 ACS and 2024 ACS)

	2019 ACS	2024 ACS
Arlington County	3.5%	1.1%
White	2.4%	0.9%
Black	7.4%	1.9%
Asian	3.9%	0.5%
Multiracial	7.3%	1.6%
Hispanic (Any Race)	7.8%	1.8%

Arlington's Digital Equity Initiative

Launched in October 2024, the Arlington Digital Equity Initiative aims to close persistent digital access gaps through a coordinated strategy, strong community partnerships, and targeted investments.

The program partners with trusted nonprofit and community organizations to engage low-income households, older adults, people with disabilities, residents of color, individuals with limited English proficiency, and residents in high-need neighborhoods. Through these partnerships, the Initiative expands access to devices, provides hands-on technical assistance and digital navigation support, and delivers digital literacy and skills training tailored to everyday needs such as employment, education, healthcare, and civic participation. The Initiative also prioritizes outreach in census tracts with lower broadband adoption and works to reduce affordability barriers by connecting residents to low-cost internet options. Together, these strategies ensure County investments are targeted, coordinated, and responsive to the residents most likely to be left behind in a digital-first environment.

For more information on Arlington's Digital Equity Initiative visit:
www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/Community-Planning-Housing-Development/Digital-Equity-

[2] American Community Survey 2024 Subject Definitions: https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/tech_docs/subject_definitions/2024_ACSSubjectDefinitions.pdf

Commuting

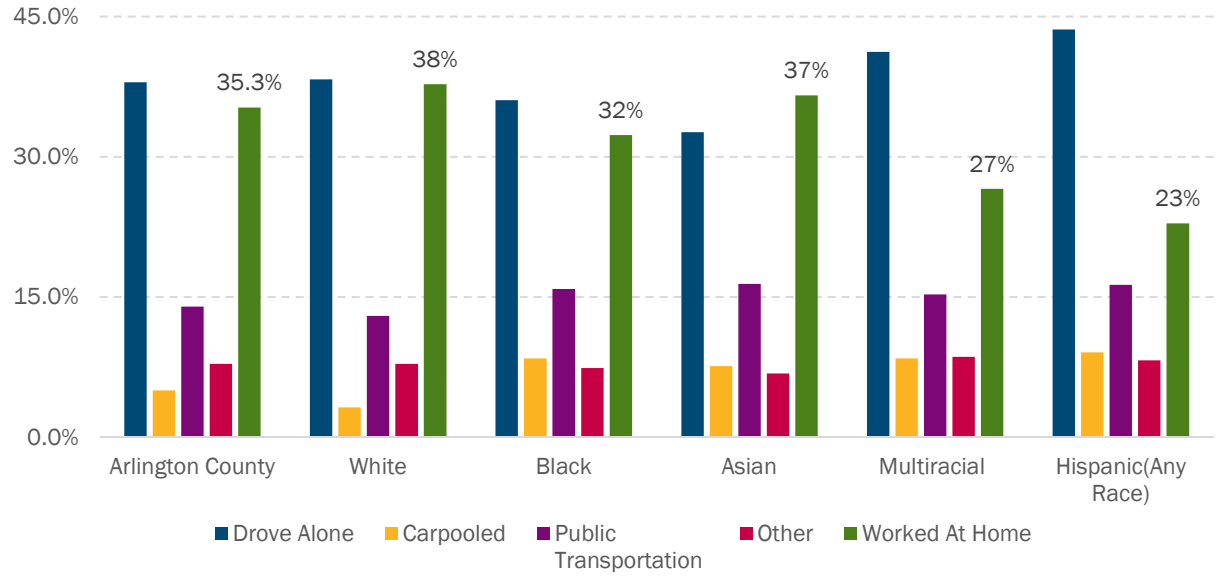
How residents aged 16 and older most often travel to work[3] shows another considerable shift in behavior since the pandemic. In 2019, only 7% of residents worked from home. The pandemic accelerated the work from home trend nationwide, reducing trips to work by car or public transit.

Figure 10: Means of Travel to Work (2019 ACS and 2024 ACS)

	2019 ACS	2024 ACS
Drove Alone	51%	38%
Carpooled	6%	5%
Public Transportation	27%	14%
Other	8%	8%
Worked At Home	7%	35%

As the region continues to adapt post pandemic, the primary mode of travel to work for Arlington residents is to drive alone to their place of employment (38%), followed closely by those who work from home (35%). Hispanic and Multiracial workers have the lowest work-from-home rates at 23% and 27%, respectively. This is followed by Black workers at 32%. The Asian and white workers have the highest shares of workers who work from home, at 36% and 38%, respectively.

Figure 11: Means of Transportation to Work (2024 ACS)



[3] Means of transportation to work include driving alone, carpooling, public transit, walking, cycling, taxicabs, motorcycles, other means, or working from home. American Community Survey 2024 Subject Definitions: https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/tech_docs/subject_definitions/2024_ACSSubjectDefinitions.pdf

The differences in work-from-home rates by race and ethnicity highlight an underlying economic disparity. Workers able to work from home are more likely to be employed in higher paying sectors such as professional and technical services, information, finance, and management - industries where remote work is widely feasible. In contrast, industries with lesser flexibility to support remote work, such as accommodations (hospitality) and food services, construction, transportation, and many healthcare roles, tend to be lower wage positions. As a result, racial and ethnic groups with lower work-from-home rates are more likely to be employed in occupations that offer fewer remote options and lower average earnings.

Figure 12: Work from Home (2019 ACS and 2024 ACS)

	2019 ACS	2024 ACS
Arlington County	7%	35%
White	7%	38%
Black	7%	32%
Asian	5%	37%
Multiracial	5%	27%
Hispanic (Any Race)	5%	23%

Looking Ahead

Collectively, these five years of data illustrate Arlington as a community that is evolving, becoming more diverse, more digitally connected, and influenced by shifting economic and social conditions. At the same time, the persistence of racial and ethnic disparities across income, poverty, education, and work patterns underscores the continued need for intentional, equity-focused action.

As Arlington upholds its priority of advancing racial equity by closing race-based gaps and improving outcomes for all, the Race and Ethnicity Dashboard remains an essential tool for understanding these dynamics and guiding policies that support a more inclusive and equitable future for all Arlington residents.

Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development

The Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development (CPHD) is comprised of six divisions - Planning, Housing, Neighborhood Services, Zoning, Inspection Services, and Business Operations. CPHD's mission is to support and guide how Arlington changes and grows physically, socially, culturally and economically to prioritize health and safety for all. CPHD staff have the experience, professionalism and expertise to work with our customers and partners to support projects and programs that meet the needs and priorities of the community.

For questions or additional information, please contact the Research and Strategic Initiatives Group (RSIG) at cphd@arlingtonva.us or (703) 228-3525.