ARLINGTON'S GUARANTEE

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Director of Grants & Initiatives

Arlington
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Economic Mobility

Initiatives and demonstration pilots designed to test strategies that prevent the displacement of our lowest income neighbors, and advocating for policy change and public resources to scale up these strategies. All of our work is grounded in the 3-fold definition of mobility from poverty: **increased income and assets, personal power over one's life, and a sense of belonging to the community.**

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You are valued.
You belong here.

ARLINGTON
VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF
HUMAN SERVICES

PROGRAM DESIGN

Privately Funded

September 2021-November 2023

$500/mo. for 18 months

200 households with children under 30% AMI, most currently on local housing grants

Protection from benefits loss; experimental design

25 returning from incarceration; 25 undocumented

Surveys every 6 months over the phone or in-person

Optional 1:1 coaching


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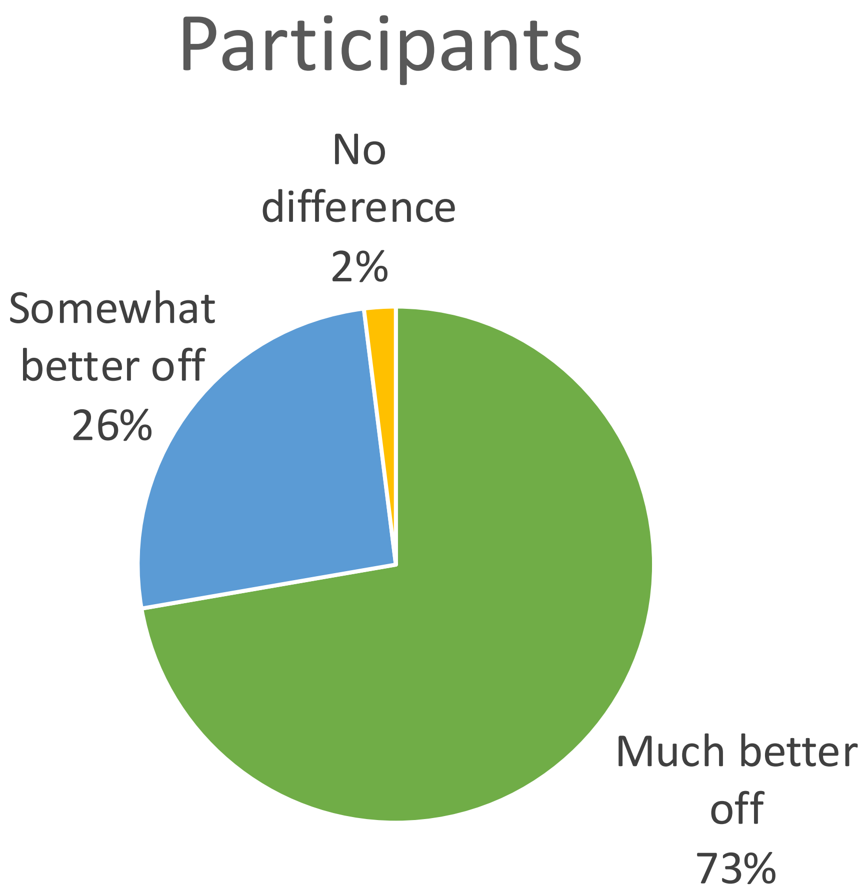
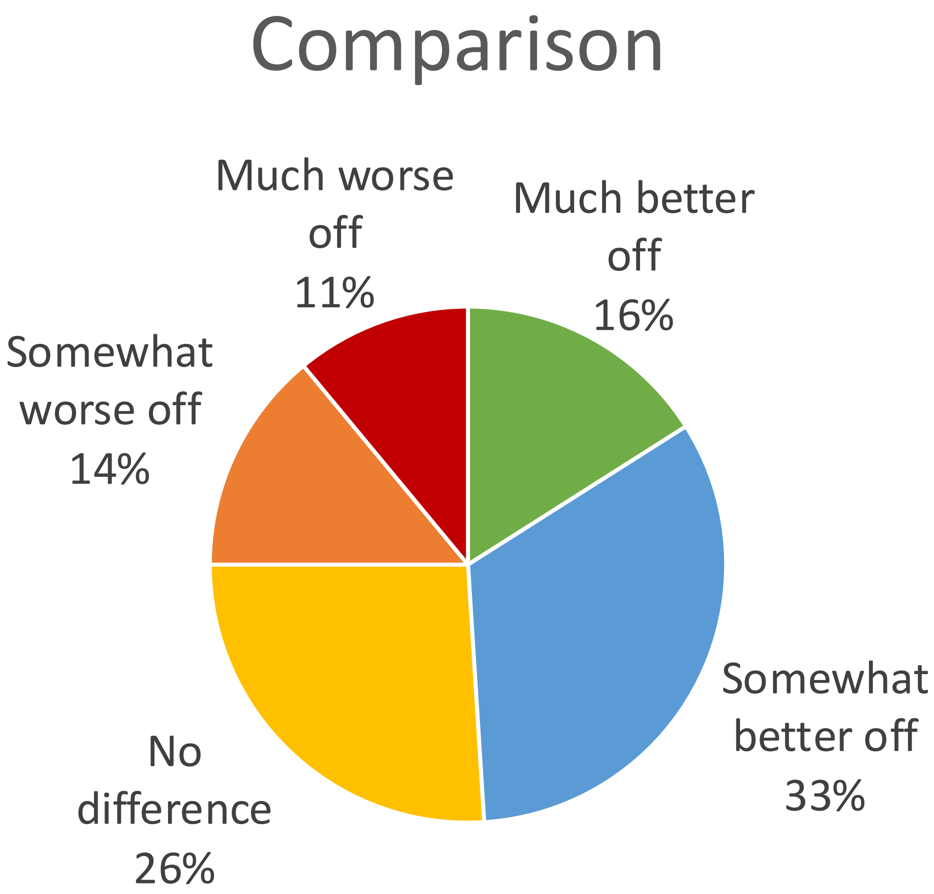
How are you and your family doing now compared to 18 months ago?





Employment rates and income **increased, albeit modestly**

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- At baseline, 1 in 4 people in both comparison and participant group were unemployed
  - **Comparison**: NO CHANGE
  - **Participant**: Increased from 75% to 87% employed
- Comparison and participant group earned $1,280 and $1,200 per month at baseline, respectively
  - **Comparison**: 9% increase to $1,400
  - **Participant**: 36% increase to $1,640

"I knew I had a pocket of income to cover the time between my jobs"

Many got **time back** for education, entrepreneurship, and family

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- 85% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the cash allowed them to use their time differently.

"With the additional money, I was able to go to school. I didn't have the pressure to work more. I had flexibility in my budget."

- 14% of participants at baseline reported <u>not having time</u> to help kids with their homework; at pilot's end, this reduced to 5%
- The comparison group reported the opposite: they reported having *less* time with to spend with kids from baseline to pilot's end.

People's **mental health** improved

- About half of both groups reported **"zero days"** where stress, anxiety, or sadness had prevented them from doing their usual activity in the last month.
  - Comparison: Remain unchanged at 58%
  - Participant: Increased to 74% by pilot's end, a 37 percent increase!

"Just the fact that I knew I had income coming, it helped me not having panic attacks…I knew I had food for the kids and could pay the bills."

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People felt **more valued** in Arlington

- 81% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that Arlington's Guarantee had made them feel more included in the community

"I was included because there are things you need to do to go out. I was able to contribute some dishes from my house for events. I wasn't isolated because I don't have income."

Barriers remain

- While several participants reported progress paying down debt, the **aggregate household debt increased**
- Participants still continued to be severely **rent-burdened,** still paying about 54% of their income in rent
- **Undocumented** participants have lower rates of employment, hourly wages, and monthly total income
- Participants returning from **incarceration** reported similar hourly wages, but were much less likely to be employed

Arlington's Living Wage Gap For Essential Jobs

Living wage is defined as the full time hourly rate that an individual in a household must make to meet the household's basic needs *without* outside assistance or sharing housing.

The median hourly rates below are derived from April 2026 JobsEQ™ real-time data on median wages *across all experience levels* for listed positions. The number in parentheses is the annual income if full-time [most are not].

2026 LIVING WAGES FOR:

1 working adult. 1 adult home with 2 children.
$98,570 annually

2 working adults. 2 children.
$184,159 annually. Both adults working, so annual need includes childcare expenses

Single adult. No children.
$62,933 annually

Source: MIT Living Wage Calculator

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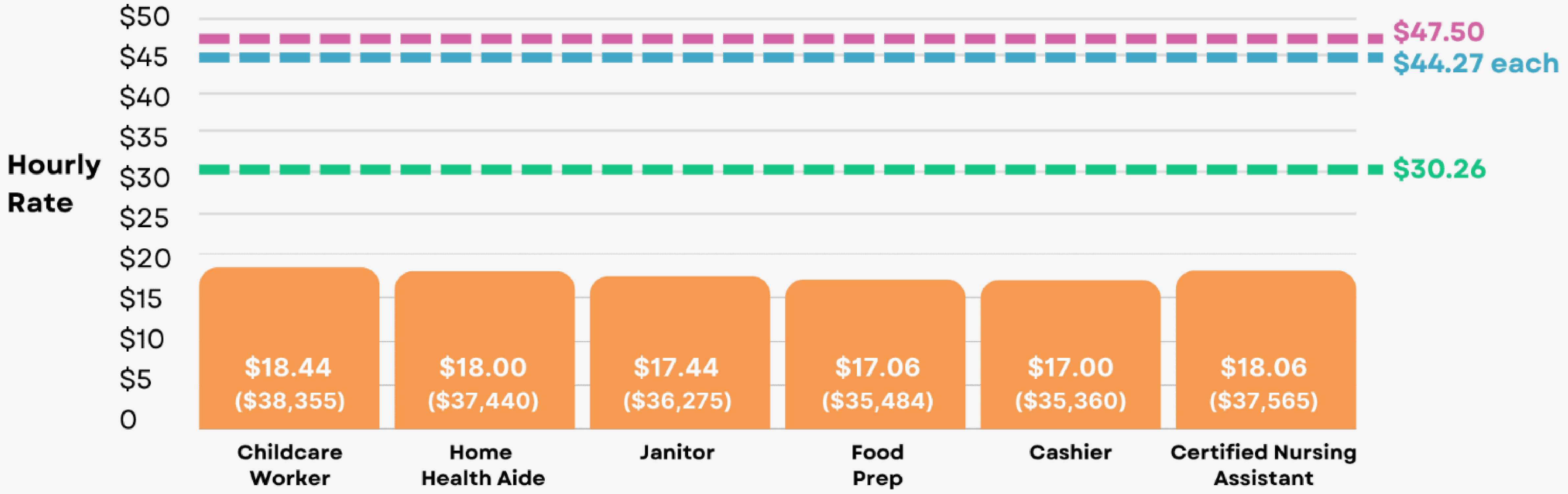

Key Take-aways

1. Predictable regular cash with no strings attached provides critical bandwidth to communities that have been long denied access to wealth and assets through punitive benefits systems and exploitative economic policies. It fills critical gaps but does not replace current social safety net benefits.

2. People know best how to prioritize financial decisions for themselves when given extra resources--whether it's to get their car fixed, pay for reliable child-care, save for an emergency, get a job certification.

3. Having a sense of control over one's life goals and a sense of belonging in community is just as important as having increased income and assets.

Recommendations

1. **Consider what your locality is spending now in social services and assess how GI can make that existing work more effective. Flexibility is key.**
2. **Support state programs that adopt GI principles, namely expanded Child Tax Credits and Earned Income Tax Credits.**
3. **Let's move away from simply thinking about pilots and instead think about programs, particularly for targeted populations. What will meet this moment?**
4. **The policy window will re-open for GI. What can you do now to be ready?**

GUARANTEED INCOME WORKS

mayorsforagi.org
countiesforaguaranteedincome.org
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