



JURISDICTIONAL BREAKDOWNS NORTHERN VIRGINIA

The inner ring counties and cities of Northern Virginia—including Arlington County and the cities of Alexandria, Falls Church, and Fairfax—include more than 420,000 of our neighbors. Home to some of our region’s wealthiest and most established neighborhoods, these jurisdictions report high levels of satisfaction with their communities, amenities, and elected officials, although affordability is reported as a major issue.

HIGHLIGHTS, CHALLENGES, AND OPPORTUNITIES

Northern Virginia residents have a lot to be proud of. Survey respondents from these jurisdictions noted very high satisfaction with life in their neighborhoods, with just 1.3 percent of respondents reporting they are “not at all likely” to recommend living in Northern Virginia to a friend or co-worker. More than 94 percent of respondents rated Northern Virginia as having “excellent” or “good” availability of goods and services. And 93 percent of respondents rated the availability of arts and cultural opportunities as “excellent” or good,” by far the highest rating in the region.

As one focus group participant stated, “I think Northern Virginia is great. It is ethnically diverse. [You are] exposed to [people with] different backgrounds, cultures, food. A lot of resources in the DC area. Museums and government, they are readily available. It is a big city, but not too big. Great parks. Nice suburbs. People are accepting, and the school system is great.”

“ There are lots of opportunities [in Northern Virginia and the region] - lots of parks, rail stations, museums that are all free.

Like their neighbors in Fairfax County, local residents feel generally safe in their community—just 8 percent of respondents rated Northern Virginia as either “not very safe” or “not safe at all.” On a related note, 94 percent of Northern Virginia respondents noted that their jurisdiction is a safe place for children. Nearly 80 percent of Northern Virginia respondents rated their local public schools as “excellent” or “good.”

Northern Virginia residents also reported the most positive outlook for employment, with 89 percent saying the area’s availability of good jobs is either “excellent” or “good,” which is the highest in the region.

Q21d. HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE AVAILABILITY OF GOOD JOBS IN THE PLACE WHERE YOU LIVE?

	DC	PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY	MONTGOMERY COUNTY	FAIRFAX COUNTY	OTHER NORTHERN VIRGINIA
EXCELLENT	32%	22%	33%	43%	43%
GOOD	39%	41%	43%	42%	46%
FAIR	20%	29%	20%	13%	8%
POOR	9%	8%	4%	3%	3%

While there are several bright spots, there are areas of life that Northern Virginia residents rated less favorably, notably affordability. Nearly 32 percent of respondents note they know someone in their jurisdiction who had to move somewhere else for a reason other than their own choice—only the District’s rating of 35 percent was

“ For myself, [the quality of life here] is very good. But for many, it’s tough and getting tougher.

noting their housing was redeveloped or demolished. More than 40 percent of these individuals moved out of the region entirely, higher than other jurisdictions except Fairfax. Curiously, only 24.8 percent of Northern Virginia respondents reported that addressing affordable housing was an “extremely high” priority for local government.

Northern Virginia respondents are more mobile than many of their neighbors, with the average number of years living in the same home of 8.5 years being the lowest in the region. Nearly 60 percent of Northern Virginia respondents report having lived at their current home for 5 years or less—much higher than other areas (in DC, for example, this number is just 37 percent). The area is also home to a high number of recent arrivals to the region, with 25.6 percent of respondents noting they’ve been in the Washington area less than five years—the largest share in the region and ten points higher than in Fairfax County.

ISSUE FOCUS: DISCRIMINATION

In terms of discrimination, a lower share of respondents in Northern Virginia note that preventing discrimination should be an “extremely high” priority for local government—just 28 percent. Just under 25 percent of respondents note they have experienced discrimination in the past year. By jurisdiction, all ranked discrimination because of race and ethnicity as most common. For people experiencing discrimination, gender discrimination and discrimination based on sexual orientation were more common for people living in Northern Virginia (68 percent and 22 percent, respectively) than across the region (48 percent and 13 percent, respectively). Hinting at a diverse immigrant population, nearly 27 percent of these respondents note that discrimination based on native language was a challenge.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

Northern Virginia residents are among our region’s most politically engaged, with 90 percent of survey respondents reporting they are registered to vote and 67 percent reporting having voted in the last year. These respondents also rated the leadership of their elected officials more highly than in any other jurisdiction—17 percent rated officials as “excellent,” much higher than the next highest jurisdiction (Montgomery County at 12 percent).

Northern Virginia reported the least amount of religious engagement across the region, with just 18.3 percent reporting they were a part of a church-affiliated group, and only 41 percent reporting having been to church once in the last year.

Northern Virginia respondents were very moderate in their input on priorities for local government. While 53 percent of Northern Virginia respondents reported that addressing crime was an “extremely high” priority, no other issue garnered a majority of responses. Out of all local jurisdictions, a lower share of Northern Virginia respondents rated education for children as an “extremely high” priority than any other area—just 39.2 percent rated it highly.

Like their neighbors in Fairfax County, Northern Virginia respondents rely on nonprofits for services at a lower rate than in most jurisdictions—62.1 percent of respondents note they “never” avail themselves of the services nonprofits offer, and 83 percent of those respondents report they simply do not need any services at all.