



BY ALEXANDRIA CITY HIGH SCHOOL



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TOPIC

HIGH COST OF LIVING AND ITS IMPACT

TOPIC DESCRIPTION

The High Cost of living in Alexandria is making it hard for many families including students at ACHS to afford rent, food, and bills. As prices rise families worry everyday, which causes stress and affects their health. Students often have to pick up extra work or go without basic needs. This makes it harder for them to focus in class and plan for college or their career. It matters because if they can't afford these basic things their future success is at risk.

BASELINE DATA & GOAL

What Do We Know + What Is the Goal?

In Alexandria the cost of living is about 24% higher than the U.S average and housing cost are roughly 70% higher. As of April 2026 the Average monthly rent for an Apartment is about 2,176. My goal is collect at least 50 canned food and hygiene item donation during a school donation drive to help families struggling with high living cost

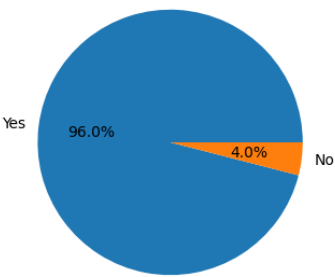
CYCP GOAL & STRATEGIC AREA

The CYCP goal that connects to my issue is making sure children and youth have a safe and stable environment. The high cost of living affects students and families in Alexandria by causing stress over rent, food, gas, and bills. When families struggle financially, it becomes harder for students to focus in school and plan for their future

WHAT IS HAPPENING RIGHT NOW?

This will, most likely, come from the Titan Changemakers Data. Discuss how ACPS/ACHS is currently doing in regard to your issue.

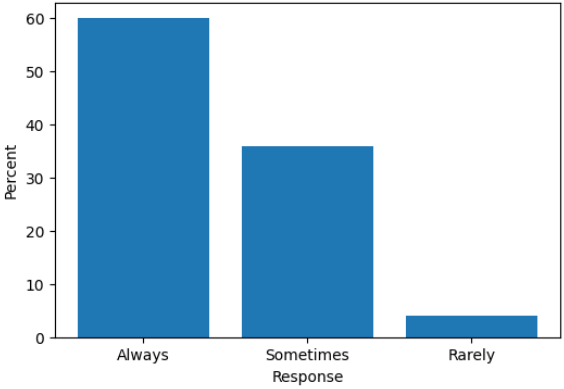
Do Rising Prices Affect Daily Life?



Some strategies already tried includes food pantries and small emergency grants. However the data shows 96% still feel the daily impact of rising prices. This means those strategies are not working effectively and more action is needed.

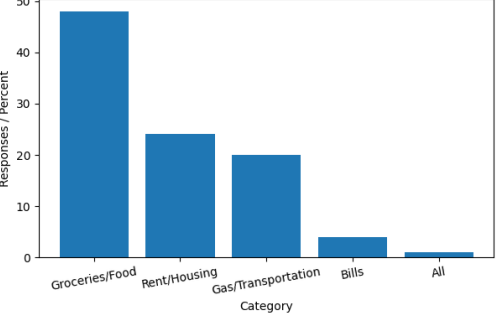
The Data shows that 96% of people said rising prices affect them. This matters because nearly everyone in the community is feeling the strain which impacts their daily decisions.

How Often People Worry About the Cost of Living



The Data shows that 60% always worry and 36% sometimes worry. This matters because constant worry can affect students ability to focus and succeed.

Which Cost Affects People the Most?



The Data shows groceries/food (48 response) and rent /housing (24 response) are the biggest burdens. This matters because when families pay more for food and rent they have less left for other important things like saving or health

WHAT HAS ALREADY BEEN TRIED?

In the City there are a few efforts already underway. For example local food banks like ALX Community Aid provide free groceries to families and some nonprofits offer small grants to help with rent or utilities. The city has also been working on affordable housing plans through they're still in progress. Even with these steps the surveys show that most families still feel the pinch so more action is really

WHO CAN HELP?

The Alexandria Redevelopment and housing units offering more public housing options and providing rental assistance to keep cost down. Hunger Free Alexandria can help by making sure families have regular access to food so that even when budgets are tight no one has to worry about their next meal.



HUNGER FREE
ALEXANDRIA

ARHA
Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?

Quantity: What actions have been taken?

Quality: How well are those actions working?

The City and organizations have taken some steps. In terms of quantity Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority has added a few new affordable units and Hunger Free Alexandria has distributed thousands of meal. In terms of quality through these actions are still limited. Many families still feel the strain so while its a good start these efforts haven't fully closed the gap at the community level. Despite these efforts the number of families needing help is still raising and the current support isn't enough to fully lose the gap.

IS IT ACTUALLY HELPING?

Use data to explain if the actions taken so far are making a difference.

Are people better off or not?

The cost of living Alexandria is about 26 percent higher than the U.S average according to pay-scale. Additionally BestPlace gives Alexandria a cost of living index of 144.7 meaning expenses are about 44.7% above the national average. Based on the Data people are not significant better off yet.Despite some efforts the overall cost of living remains much higher than the national average and many families continue to be financially strained.

WHAT SHOULD CHANGE? (YOUR SOLUTION)

Explain your solution in detail.

Use your survey data to support your idea.

I think we should change our solution by starting a simple canned food and supply drive at school. Our survey shows that 60% of people always worry about the cost of living so we know this is a real issue. Instead of going to each class we'll set up a drop-off table maybe in the cafeteria or nurse office and anyone who wants to donate can bring items once a week. We'll ask for thing like canned food,soap, and other essentials. We'll track how many donation. By doing this we help families right away and we also show that we care about each other. If we keep doing this each month we'll build a habit of helping and more people will notice that small actions really do makes a big difference.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?

If your solution is used, what will improve?

If we use this solution the drive will give families immediate access to essentials like food and hygiene products. As the donations grow families in need will have a little more stability, and students at school will feel more connected to their community. Over time this will build a habit of helping others and it might inspire other students or even the school to take bigger actions. In short, everyone will feel a bit safer and more supported.

CITATIONS

Citations in APA format:

Eickert, C. (2025). *Titan Changemaker Listening Session Handout* [Handout].

Source:<https://www.payscale.com/cost-of-living-calculator/Virginia-Alexandria>

Source alexandriaVA.gov

Source:ALX Community

LEARN MORE

The ALX Community Food Bank provides free groceries to families in need, helping them keep up with basic food expense.The second resource is the Alexandria Housing Development Corporation. They help by providing affordable housing options and rental assistance, so families have a better chance of staying in stable homes.