

The Catalyst for **Change**

2022 // IMPACT REPORT



ACT *for* **ALEXANDRIA**
A COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



Our collective efforts create a powerful chain reaction across our city so that we all have the opportunity to thrive.

Together we are change agents.

You are the necessary ingredient to a potent formula that combines passion, commitment, creativity, resourcefulness, and generosity to make a difference in the community we love.

As Alexandria's community foundation, ACT for Alexandria is the home for philanthropy and people who want to make a difference.

- ▶ **ACT is a convener.** We are uniquely positioned to connect many sectors within our community.
- ▶ **ACT is a catalyst.** We listen and collaborate with our partners to ignite rapid responses to needs in our community.
- ▶ **ACT is an advocate.** We bring the community together to amplify our voices and promote equity for all.

This past year we focused on critical issues in new, groundbreaking ways.

The **Youth Support Network** trained more than 100 youth-serving professionals to consider ways to support the social and emotional development of young people. We partnered with the City of Alexandria to champion **ARISE**, a guaranteed income initiative that will provide 170 low-income households with the support they need to build a brighter future. We joined the **Alexandria Community Remembrance Project's** pilgrimage to Montgomery, Alabama and provided scholarships to eliminate financial barriers to participation. We helped 35 nonprofit organizations invest in the **mental health and wellness** of their staff who have heroically supported our community throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Voices from the community continued to inform our work.

ACT's **Youth Council** brought new insights and understanding about the things important to our city's young people. We recruited residents to serve on a **Community Listening and Strategic Planning Team** that will lead outreach and synthesis to inform ACT's future strategic direction.

This report showcases stories and highlights from the past year, as well as our plans to address the current and emerging needs of our great city. Some say that social progress is equal parts science, art, and love. **You, and all of our partners, are essential in the equation for a thriving Alexandria.**

With gratitude,

HEATHER PEELER
President & CEO

ACTivating Racial Equity

ACT is helping Alexandria break free from the restraints of racism.

Advancing racial equity in our city continues to be at the forefront of our work. With our philanthropic and nonprofit partners, ACT is implementing real, practical actions, which allow us to work toward a more equitable Alexandria. We envision a community where all residents can achieve their full potential—and where the color of one's skin, ethnicity, or citizenship status do not determine their outcomes in life.

Elements for Understanding

We affirm our commitment to racial equity by creating space for continued growth and learning. **Last year, ACT's Fund for Racial Equity awarded a \$12,000 grant providing eight scholarships for the Alexandria Community Remembrance Project (ACRP)'s pilgrimage to Montgomery, Alabama.** ACRP is a city-wide initiative dedicated to helping Alexandria understand its history of racial terror and to work toward creating a welcoming community bound by equity and inclusion. Alexandria residents and Alexandria City High School students visited both the **National Memorial for Peace and Justice** and **The Legacy Museum: From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration**, bringing with them soil reflecting the lives of Alexandria's two known lynching victims—Joseph McCoy and Benjamin Thomas.

ACT continued to partner with the City's Race and Social Equity Office to promote the **30-Day Racial Equity Challenge**, an educational tool used to advance deeper understanding of the intersections of race, power, privilege, supremacy, and oppression.



Last year, the Meyer Foundation and Inova Health Foundation invested \$130,000 in ACT's racial equity work.

Co-Creating Transformative Community Change

Lisa Cohen and **Hershel Kleinberg** are passionate about racial justice. Coming from two European Jewish families with an acute understanding of systemic injustice and persecution, Lisa and Hershel have used their foundation, **Open Horizon**, to advocate for equity and inclusion across our community and throughout the country. **Eager to connect with Alexandria nonprofits serving BIPOC individuals and other immigrant neighbors** through the COVID-19 crisis, ACT connected Open Horizon to **Casa Chirilagua** and **Community Lodgings**. Working together, Open Horizon has been able to advance their core values of expanding opportunity and fostering equity, while building relationships that will continue to grow in the future. ACT's position as a community convener made it possible for Open Horizon to find the right nonprofit partners for their mission and commitment areas. **The result has been transformative community change rooted in equitable access to education, experience, and economic support.**

Accelerating Equity Through Action

ACT and our nonprofit partner **Service Never Sleeps** share an urgent and unapologetic focus on social justice. Service Never Sleeps envisions a world where equal rights, justice, and opportunity are available to all. Through their **Allyship Trainings** they are empowering individuals and groups to learn ways to center BIPOC individuals, influence others, and gain the tools needed to be an active ally. **Founder and CEO Whitney Parnell** says, "Since our early days, ACT has been an incredible supporter of Service Never Sleeps and continues to be one of our most special partners. They were among our first race equity partners and trusted us to be alongside them in their local race equity efforts." **ACT is proud to sponsor Allyship Trainings for Alexandria leaders to facilitate change personally and in their own workspaces.**

"I had a lot of trust in ACT and their ability to point out trusted community nonprofits who would be good partners for us."



LISA COHEN
Co-Founder, Open Horizon

"We continue to be grateful for our deep partnership with ACT and are inspired by how they model support and a deep commitment to the work."



WHITNEY PARNELL
Founder & CEO, Service Never Sleeps

Since 2019, ACT has trained more than 450 Alexandrians on racial equity to raise awareness and create a policy environment for a racially just community.



ACTivating Economic Mobility

ACT is changing the narrative around Alexandrians in poverty.

Our efforts to build economic mobility in Alexandria require us to address both economics and inequality in the city. ACT approaches our work with the understanding that poverty is not something people choose or happens through poor choices, but often something people are trapped in due to inequitable systems and policies.



Serving as a community quarterback, ACT is in a unique position to address the environmental success factors that support economic progress and mobilize holistic solutions.

A Formula to Thrive

Economic mobility is a key barometer of a thriving community. Data and research have revealed that when people are in charge of their own economic decisions and given the funds to address them, they make better choices for themselves and their families—**their quality of life improves**. Last year ACT supported the City of Alexandria's **guaranteed income pilot program, ARISE**. Guaranteed income is a solution proven to **increase economic mobility, ensure greater economic freedom, and improve health and wellbeing**. The ARISE pilot program provides \$500 a month, no strings attached, to 170 low-income individuals for two years. Through the **ARISE Application Partner Grant**, we leveraged our nonprofit network to share the application and encourage qualified community members to apply. Even though language barriers, cultural differences, and general skepticism could have been major speedbumps in collecting applications, through ACT's work with the City and our nonprofit application partners, **more than 4,000 applications were submitted**.

“Equity was a main concern. Our partnership with ACT helped make sure local nonprofits were equipped to spread the word. They understood the unique needs of their communities and were able to get people who might normally shy away to apply.”

LESA GILBERT

Director, Center for Economic Support,
City of Alexandria



care regardless of their constituents' ability to pay. As an **ARISE Application Partner**, Neighborhood Health was awarded \$15,000 in funding for targeted outreach to community members eligible to apply for the ARISE program. **They focused on meeting people where they were: they spoke their languages, served their needs, and made themselves available for direct assistance whenever possible.** Neighborhood Health's work as an application partner was critical to reaching Alexandrians in need.

The Power of Partnership

Being a catalyst in our community means escalating strategic responses and resources. ACT is able to address our city's most pressing needs by working closely with our nonprofit partners—organizations who serve diverse populations across Alexandria.

Neighborhood Health is one of those organizations and was a natural partner for the ARISE program. Neighborhood Health's mission is to improve health and advance health equity in Alexandria by providing high quality primary

An Experiment on Poverty

For those who have not experienced financial hardships firsthand, it can be difficult to understand the challenges and choices vulnerable families face every day. Last year ACT sponsored the **United Way's 30|30 program**, an interactive online learning experience in which participants are led through a series of difficult choices and setbacks that are often felt by those experiencing poverty. Participants assumed the identity of a low-wage earner with a family and were asked to make 30 decisions over 30 days—**illuminating the challenges families face and why so many hardworking people have difficulty making ends meet.** To further the conversation, ACT hosted a post-event discussion for those interested in learning more about what our community can do to help.

“I used to think if I had this experience in real life, I'd figure things out. Now after the fatigue and stress of COVID, I'm not so sure.”

30|30 PROGRAM
PARTICIPANT

ACTivating Youth Success

ACT is reshaping the way Alexandria supports its young people.

The children of Alexandria deserve a safe and supportive community to learn and grow. As the African proverb says, “It takes a village to raise a child.” ACT is working to ensure our village is strong, connected, and well equipped to serve Alexandria’s children and youth—and that our young people have a seat at the table and a voice in their community.

A Positive Chain Reaction: Youth at Work for Alexandria

Designed for youth by youth, ACT’s Youth Council was created with the purpose of **providing Alexandria’s young people decision-making power and funding to address key issues important to them and their peers**. In their first year of service, the 10-member Youth Council was given the opportunity to guide learning conversations, support city-wide youth initiatives, coordinate ACT’s Spring2ACTion events, and research and propose solutions to Alexandria youth’s most pressing challenges. Members presented two widely viewed presentations to Alexandria City Council and Alexandria School Board members. **Their work has begun to raise awareness across our community and outside the borders of Alexandria.** As part of this expanding program, youth will have an opportunity to design and launch grant programs to address issues most pertinent to them, build skills in community-organizing and advocacy, and network with Alexandria leaders. The Youth Council’s newest members are excited to present even more ideas to changemakers in the city.

“Usually adults say they want to hear youth voices but don’t really mean it, but in the Youth Council I felt like my voice actually had power.”

YOUTH COUNCIL MEMBER

Youth Council members chose to focus their efforts on two critical issues: Supporting Students of Immigrant Families and Supporting LGBTQ+ Youth in Alexandria.



Compounds for a Collaborative Ecosystem

ACT believes every child can thrive through equitable access and engagement in high-quality out-of-school time and community-based programs. With support from the Frank and Betty Wright Foundation, the **Youth Support Network** was formed to better address the urgent educational, enrichment, and health needs of Alexandria's low-income youth. By leveraging ACT's experience as a convener, **we broke down silos to engage out-of-school time stakeholders serving youth.** Monthly workshops and small groups encouraged new collaborations, partnerships, and coordinated supports. **Randy Gore, Senior Director of Out-of-School Time Programs for Campagna Center,** says, "ACT and the Youth Support Network have supported and fostered togetherness and unity with out-of-school time organizations. Every month we are in the same room talking about how to advance as a collection of providers." **Last year the Youth Support Network expanded its size and scope, engaging over 80 organizations across Alexandria.**

"There is a sense of camaraderie. ACT has brought us all to the table, widening the number of resources and ideas shared across the community."



RANDY GORE
Senior Director of Out-of-School
Time Programs, Campagna Center

"ACT not only introduced me to other active philanthropists but has educated me as one."



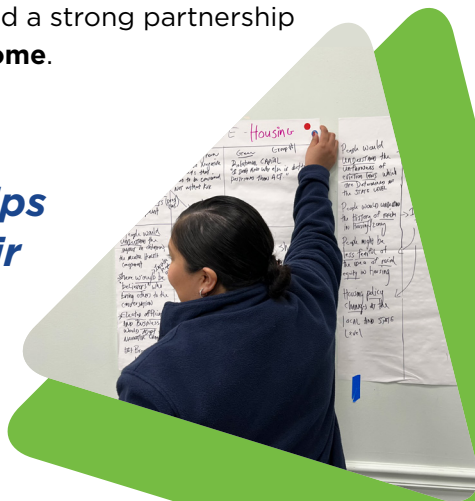
JENNIFER GALE
ACT Donor

Donor Chemistry

Longtime Alexandria resident **Jennifer Gale** knows all about the benefits of supporting our city's youth "from cradle to career." With years of both personal and professional time spent serving children and young people, Jennifer has keen insight into the value of one-on-one mentoring, tutoring, and connecting our city's youth to vital community resources. ACT shares Jennifer's passion as **we closely monitor community needs, opportunities and resources, and**

assist donors in investing in innovative solutions that affect lasting change. "ACT practices exceptional fiscal responsibility and provides a diversity of support services to our city," Jennifer says. "That is something I am attracted to in an organization. They have worked hard to build trust in the community." We are extremely fortunate to have Jennifer as our neighbor and champion for Alexandria's young people. Our joint priority of Youth Success has created a strong partnership that will **continue to serve the children in our community for years to come.**

As a thought partner with local donors, ACT helps find organizations or causes that align with their philanthropic vision.



ACTivating COVID-19 Relief

The rippling impacts of COVID-19 continue to be felt across our city. ACT's rapid and ongoing recovery efforts provide critical support where it is needed most.

Childcare Workforce Stabilization Grants

COVID-19 put a spotlight on the critical role that childcare plays in supporting the city's economy, businesses, and families. Newfound challenges brought on by the pandemic have tested Alexandria's childcare providers. In partnership with Alexandria City local government, ACT awarded sustainability grants to **help relieve the stress and financial burdens our providers continue to face.**

Community Access Grants

Alexandria's nonprofits have deep, trusted relationships within our community. They help bridge the gap as community service "navigators" when language, literacy, technology, and other barriers pose a challenge for those applying for assistance. In collaboration with the City's Department of Community and Human Services, ACT awarded Community Access Grants to ensure that our local nonprofits are **spreading knowledge and increasing access to government benefits and community resources for neighbors in need.**

Emergency Support Grants

Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, ACT has remained on the frontlines with our nonprofit partners, **providing tangible aid to our neighbors impacted by the pandemic.** In partnership with the City's Department of Community and Human Services, ACT awarded Emergency Support Grants to community nonprofits and safety net organizations to **address the urgent and ongoing needs of Alexandrians**—such as transportation assistance, food, eviction prevention, and rental assistance.

Alexandria Resilience Fund—Mental Health and Wellness Grants

We know a strong and resilient nonprofit sector is vital for a vibrant and thriving Alexandria. In conversations with nonprofit leaders, ACT learned about the emotional and physical toll (health, well-being, burnout) the past 2+ years have had on the staff at organizations providing critical services to Alexandrians. We decided to direct the next phase of the Alexandria Resilience Fund to **provide targeted grants for mental health and wellness support for nonprofit staff.** In addition to therapy sessions, grantees organized seminars, speakers, book discussions, and retreats teaching mindfulness, storytelling, art therapy, and more—starting (or restarting) traditions of care and connection.

ACT by the Numbers



100% of fund holders are satisfied with ACT's service

2022 GRANTMAKING

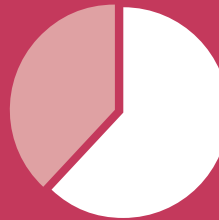


\$6,348,674
Awarded



441
Organizations

1,002
Grants processed



62%
of grant funds were
awarded to
organizations that
serve Alexandria

ALEXANDRIA RESILIENCE FUND— MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS GRANTS



\$158,724
Awarded



35
Organizations

CITY OF ALEXANDRIA, ARPA FUNDED GRANTS

Childcare Workforce Stabilization Grants



\$575,284
Awarded



78
Organizations

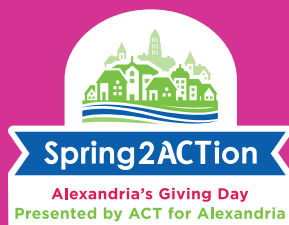
Community Access and Emergency Support Grants



\$2,517,754
Awarded



23
Organizations



\$2,648,583
Raised



172
Participating
nonprofit organizations



7,700
Participating
donors

*Note: The \$2.65M raised through Spring2ACTION went directly to the nonprofit organizations; it is not part of the \$6.3M distributed in grants.

*"Before, we came to our work
with shame and sadness, and
now we come with love and joy."*



**ELIZABETH JONES
VALDERRAMA**

Executive Director, OAR of Arlington, Alexandria and
Falls Church, Alexandria Resilience Fund Grantee

Synthesizing **Community + Collaboration**

*Next year ACT celebrates our 20th Anniversary—
two decades of community and collaboration.*

Our founders, who came together during a time of tragedy after 9/11, believed in the potential of what people could achieve when they work together. From the seed of an idea, a lasting community institution has grown for which we can all be proud. **ACT was formed in the spirit of community and collaboration.** That spirit inspires our work today and is what will propel us on the road ahead. While we will set aside time next year to celebrate ACT's achievements over the last two decades, our critical work continues—and it continues with you: our donors, nonprofit partners, stakeholders, and neighbors.

Our eyes and ears are open as ACT responds to our community, learns from others, serves as a bridge builder and connector, and takes on Alexandria's big challenges.

In October 2022, ACT set out to engage our donors, supporters, and the community to shape our strategy for the next five years. Led by an 18-member **Community Listening and Strategic Planning Team**, we engaged **nearly 300 Alexandrians** in interviews, focus groups, and a survey to understand **their vision for the future of Alexandria and how ACT can help.**



***ACT believes resident engagement
can have a transformational impact
on communities when they are
empowered to lead.***

Community members are clear: affordable housing, education, and economic opportunity were identified as urgent needs in Alexandria. **Our residents believe ACT can and should play a role in tackling these persistent, complex issues important to our city.** Through our strategic planning process, ACT will affirm our commitment to a racially just and equitable Alexandria by identifying specific ways we can work with our partners to continue our focus on youth success and economic mobility, and explore our role in addressing long-standing challenges like affordable housing.

As we go forward in our racial equity journey, ACT understands that combating racial inequality is not an “issue of the moment,” but an ongoing challenge that requires investment, dedication, and adaptability. We hope to refine and build upon our past success as a community quarterback and mobilizer to **cultivate an inclusive community through belonging.** A sense of shared togetherness and belonging helps bring greater purpose and meaning to our lives, and is key to fostering a safer, healthier, and more vibrant Alexandria. Our city’s greatest asset is its people. By respecting the diversity of all Alexandrians and being intentional in what we do, we can **create a more understanding and compassionate community for all who live here.** ACT will continue to give underrepresented voices, including our youth, an opportunity to be heard, make a difference, and advocate for themselves and their neighbors.

ACT’s goal is to create a place where everyone feels welcome—where everyone is an active participant and a catalyst for change.



The actions you take today shape the future. Legacy giving allows donors to create a meaningful philanthropic legacy by designating a significant gift to a charitable organization during their life or through an estate plan. With the intention of creating enduring and sustainable support for our nonprofit partners and the constituents they serve; **Think Ahead Alexandria** will be a community-wide effort to inspire meaningful contributions to nonprofits across the city.

Think Ahead Alexandria is an initiative of ACT.

Are you a donor who would like to know more, or a nonprofit who is interested in our upcoming toolkit? Scan the QR code.



2022 ACT TEAM

SALLY BOLGER GARDNER, Operations Manager

CAITLIN BROWN, Youth Support Manager

JOHN DIETZ, Intern

AALIYAH KERR, Program Coordinator

MOLLY KLEIN, Program Associate

LEEANN NAPOLEON TURKAL, Development & Program Manager

HEATHER PEELER, President & CEO

KYLE REARDON, Communications Manager

TRICIA RITCHIE, Chief Development Officer

JANAE THOMPSON, Youth Council Program Associate

BRANDI YEE, Chief Program Officer



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

John Armstrong

Karen Avery

David Baker

Virginia Bennett

Julia Burgos

Molly Dahl

Scott Darling

Rose Dawson

Maureen Devine-Ahl

Jennifer Ferrara

Laurie Flynn

Chris Foster

Lisa Guernsey

Charles Holt

Bryan Jackson

Mark Jinks

Basim Khan

Joe LaMountain

Stephanie Landrum

Brian Lundeen

Peter Madigan

Lisa Martin

Peter McElwain

Lori Morris, Emeritus

Erik Muendel

Phyllis Patterson

Betsey Rosenbaum

Amy Rutherford

Rabbi David Spinrad

Gene Steuerle, Emeritus

Rob Whittle

YOUTH COUNCIL MEMBERS

William Gomez-Palacios

Alessandra Guevara

Michaela Islas

Alyssa Lalueces

Amel Mohdali

Danielle Pascale

Katherine Radt

Indigo Samson-Bryant

Diarra Sangare

Isaiah Sitton

COMMUNITY LISTENING AND STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM

Patricia Amaya

Bill Campbell

Rodrigo Ferro

Cecilia Garcia

Maureen Devine-Ahl

Mark Jinks

Naima Kearney

Brenda Martinez

Denise Matalas

Keren Moreno

Steve Perkins

Shakina Rawlings

Lawrence Smith

Mahlet Tefera

Kia Terry

Thank you to our staff, board of directors, donors, grantees, and community members for being a part of ACT's 19th year of service. There is no place we would rather be than in the lab creating real change with you.





ACT *for* ALEXANDRIA
A COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

201 N. Union Street, Suite 110
Alexandria, VA 22314
actforalexandria.org

Connect with us!



ACTforAlexandria



actforalexandria



company/action-alexandria



ACTforAlex



@ACTionAlexandria

SMALL COMMUNITY. BIG IMPACT.