

# Arlandria Income and Population Survey and Findings

**Low cost housing needed to prevent the displacement  
and gentrification of low-income Latinx neighborhood  
near Amazon HQ**

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# Summary:

A large survey of tenant households in a Latinx neighborhood close to Amazon's new second headquarters, or HQ2, reveals a unique community of long-tenured and already rent-burdened low-income households. Fully 95 percent of those families surveyed earn less than 40 percent of the Area Media Income (AMI).

That means "workforce housing" proposed at 60 percent or more of AMI will contribute to the gentrification and displacement pressures already being felt. If the largely Latinx community of Arlandria is to be preserved, state and local government and private philanthropies must be focused on the particular needs of these current residents that add cultural capital and vibrancy to our community. Only intentional interventions can save the community known to its residents as *Chirilagua*.



Image 1-4: Snapshots from the Arlandria/Chirilagua neighborhood



# The Survey:

Tenants and Workers United (TWU), a non-profit, non-partisan community group founded 32 years ago, recently conducted a survey of 285 households living among 2,537 moderately-priced apartments in the Arlandria neighborhood. There are 3,100 moderately priced apartments in Arlandria of which 2,537 were accessible to surveyors. This neighborhood, located less than two miles from Amazon.com Inc's planned HQ2, is home to a unique Latinx community called Chirilagua by most Spanish-speaking area residents.

TWU conducted the survey with the advice of Dr. Ishizawa and Mr. McClure because of its fear that, absent government intervention, these residents will, over time, be forced from the area as property owners realize higher rents from higher-income workers which Amazon will attract. There has already been a 17 percent increase in area housing sale prices, which have surged since Amazon's announcement of its plan to locate in Crystal City in November, 2018. The HQ2 site is located at Arlington County's southeastern border adjoining the City of Alexandria.

Subsequently, Amazon and state and local government officials have publicly supported "workforce housing" which is often described as housing affordable to teachers, police and firefighters. As this study shows, the residents who will be most impacted and likely to be forced from the area are mostly long-term area residents who are Latinx, immigrants, and with two or more adults working full time for low wages. Workforce housing is geared to higher income brackets; based on current regional data, is much more likely to be occupied by residents who are "non-Hispanic" whites.

Evelin Urrutia, the Executive Director of Tenants and Workers United, led a team of volunteers and staff in conducting the survey. Professor Hiromi Ishizawa from George Washington University reviewed the data and sorted it into a more useable form. Stephen McClure created the attached graphs and charts. Apartments were door-knocked randomly with the goal of interviewing at least 10 percent of the households from each accessible area apartment complex. Participating households were more likely to be Latinx than indicated by the 2010 Census for tract 2012.03. That probably reflects race and income patterns: homeowners are more likely to be white and tenants more likely to be Latinx.

## Findings:

The Arlandria tenant population is overwhelmingly Latinx. Seventy-five percent of its residents speak Spanish and the Latinx residents are, in descending order, Salvadoran (42 percent), Honduran (22 percent) and Guatemalan (7 percent).

The Arlandria Latinx population has been in the neighborhood for a long time. The average length of residency was 12.5 years. this is an indicator of the unique cultural role of Arlandria. There is a sense of community derived from common histories, language, culture and in-language shopping and small businesses.

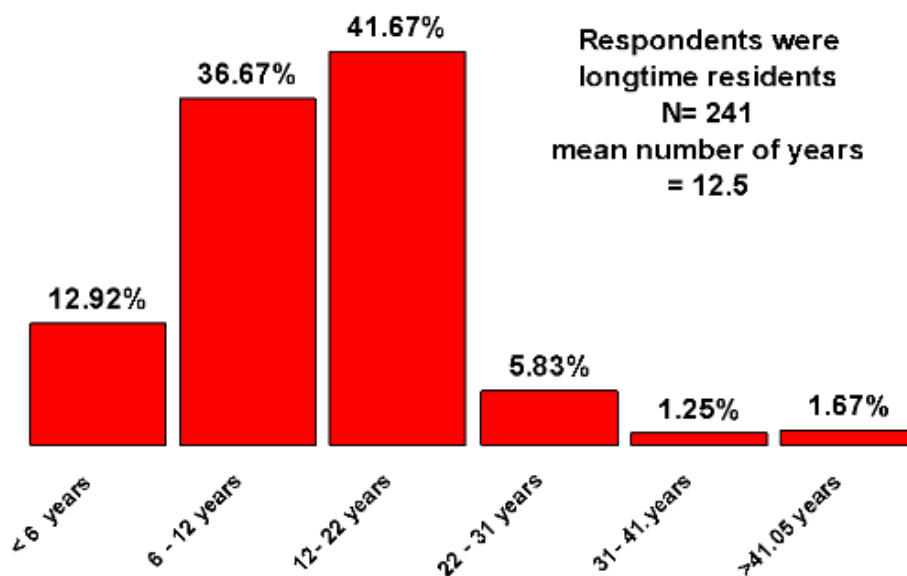


Figure 1: Survey respondents are mostly long-time residents of the Arlandria neighborhood

The residents of Arlandria housing generally work and are very low-income. Sixty-seven percent of the respondent households earn less than 30 percent of area median income (AMI) and another 28 percent earn less than 40 percent of AMI.

Survey: Combined Total Yearly income for Whole Household					
Range		Households	%	# People	%
Less than \$28,000		87	34.49%	347	37.4%
\$28,000-\$37,999		78	30.8%	297	32.0%
\$38,000 - \$46,999		35	13.8%	142	15.3%
\$47,000 +		53	21.0%	142	15.3%
<i>totals</i>		253	100.00%	928	100.0%

**Table 1: Median Income of Survey respondents. Compare to Median Income in the Washington Metro Region: \$117,200.00**

MSA: Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD HUD Metro FMR Area								
%	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	Six	Seven	Eight
80%	\$54,250	\$62,000	\$69,750	\$77,450	\$83,650	\$89,850	\$96,050	\$102,250
60%	\$49,260	\$56,280	\$63,300	\$70,320	\$75,960	\$81,600	\$87,240	\$92,880
50%	\$41,050	\$46,900	\$52,750	\$58,600	\$63,300	\$68,000	\$72,700	\$77,400
40%	\$32,840	\$37,520	\$42,200	\$46,880	\$50,640	\$54,400	\$58,160	\$61,920
30%	\$24,650	\$28,150	\$31,650	\$35,150	\$38,000	\$40,800	\$43,600	\$46,400

**Table 2: AMI incomes by family size for the Washington Metro region**

Survey Respondents: Households meeting the 30- 50% of AMI standard											
Yearly Household Income			How many people live in this apartment (%)								N= 195
			one	two	three	four	five	six	seven	eight	tal %
Less than \$28,000			2%	12%	23%	28%	23%	8%	2%	2%	60 100%
\$28,000-\$37,999			5%	21%	17%	29%	19%	8%	2%	0%	63 100%
\$38,000-\$46,999			7%	4%	19%	33%	22%	19%	4%	0%	29 100%
\$47,000 +			23%	19%	16%	19%	23%	0%	0%	0%	43 100%
Total %			8%	15%	19%	27%	22%	8%	2%	1%	95 100%

*Red= 50% of AMI, orange= 40% of AMI, Yellow=30% of AMI*

**Table 3: The margin of error at the .95 confidence level is  $\pm 6.795\%$  for a sample size of 285 and a total number of households = 3100.**

Estimate of rental households affected				
AMI	Households (survey)	Confidence interval	low	high
$\geq 50\%$	9%	$\pm 25\%$	0%	34%
$\geq 40\%$	28%	$\pm 13\%$	15%	41%
$\geq 30\%$	67%	$\pm 8\%$	59%	75%

**Table 4: Summary table extracted from table 3, n=3100**

Residents are already paying a huge portion of their income toward rent. They are not likely to be able to pay significant rent increases.

Combined Yearly income and rents % of total. N=284								
Combined Total HH Yearly income	less than \$1,000	\$1,000 - \$1,499	\$1500 - \$1,999	\$2,000 - \$2,999	\$4,000 - \$4,000 +	(blank )	sum	%
Less than \$28,000	7%	11%	11%	2%	0%	0%	87	31%
\$28,000-\$37,999	4%	12%	11%	1%	0%	0%	78	27%
\$38,000-\$46,999	0%	4%	7%	1%	0%	0%	35	12%
\$47,000 +	0%	9%	8%	0%	0%	0%	53	19%
(blank)	0%	4%	3%	0%	0%	4%	31	11%
total %	11%	39%	40%	5%	0%	5%		100%
total	32	110	113	14	1	14	284	100%
>50% of yearly income		23%	22%	3%				48%

Table 5: Households estimated to be severely rent-burdened at >50% of yearly income in rent

Arlandria tenants need two and three-bedroom apartments to be properly housed. Over three-fourths of surveyed residents have three or more people in their household.

How many bedrooms is your apartment? % of total, N= 283							
people living in this apartment	1 Bedroom s	2 Bedroom s	3 Bedroom s	4 Bedroom s	Studi o	(blank )	Total
1	5.65%	0.71%	0.00%	0.00%	4.59%	0.00%	31
2	8.13%	3.53%	0.00%	0.00%	2.12%	0.35%	40
3	10.25%	6.36%	0.00%	0.00%	0.71%	0.00%	49
4	11.66%	12.01%	1.41%	0.35%	0.00%	0.35%	73
5	8.13%	10.25%	2.12%	0.00%	0.35%	0.00%	59
6	2.12%	3.18%	0.00%	0.35%	0.00%	0.35%	17
7	0.71%	0.71%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	4
8	0.35%	0.35%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.35%	3
(blank)	1.06%	0.35%	0.35%	0.00%	0.00%	0.71%	7
Grand Total	48%	37%	4%	1%	8%	2%	283
Potentially overcrowded	33.22%	14.49%	2.12%		1.06%		51%

Table 6: Potentially overcrowded apartments are highlighted, around 51%

# Policy Implications:

The Arlandria / Chirilagua neighborhood is a unique cultural asset; there is a concentration of long-term Latinx residents who, despite small apartments and high rents, call it home. Their presence – cultural, political, economic and social – is what makes Arlandria / Chirilagua a unique regional asset.

Preserving this neighborhood and its current residents from very predictable gentrification and displacement will require public and private investments focused on their needs and financial capacity. Housing programs should be focused on the two-thirds of area households that earn 30 percent or less of area median income, and the other quarter that earn less than 40% of the AMI.

There is a need for more two-bedroom and larger apartments because seventy-seven percent of area households have three or more residents.

Preserving housing is more cost-effective than building new apartments. A top priority for local and state government and for private philanthropy should be in the preservation of the 3,100 moderately priced apartments in the Arlandria / Chirilagua neighborhood.



Image 5: A community festival in Arlandria in 2007