

# ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS



## SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2024.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

### PROGRAM INFORMATION

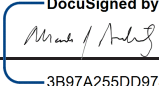
County: Arlington County  
Program Title: Data-Driven Dashboards  
Program Category: Information Technology

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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### SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Mark Schwartz  
Title: County Manager

Signature:   
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# Virginia Association of Counties Achievement Awards Submission

## Arlington County's Data-Driven Dashboards

### Abstract

In 2019, the Arlington County Board adopted an [Equity Resolution](#) which included a commitment to identify and reduce disparities within the county. Although Arlington had a long-standing practice in compiling annual statistics, this new commitment created an opportunity to think creatively about how best to display statistics and metrics that tell Arlington's story about racial equity and inequities.

The resulting visualization tools allow users to toggle between countywide and specific population data, and offers an easily accessible way to view wage, employment, education, and other household differences – just some of the variables that contribute to opportunity (or limitations) to achieving a greater quality of life.

### Problem, Challenge or Situation Being Addressed

In 2019, two discreet events occurred in Arlington County that changed the course of how Arlington reviews and presents data related to population, housing, employment, development, transportation, and community services. First, in September 2019, the Arlington County Board adopted an [Equity Resolution](#). In its resolution, the County Board committed to actions designed to identify and reduce disparities with a goal to intentionally and collectively advance equity. Two specific actions (listed below) are intrinsically related to the Data-Driven Dashboards Project presented in this application.

4. Collecting and disaggregating data to identify where disparities and gaps in service and administration exist;
7. Establishing equity targets and measures and developing an equity scorecard as part of an Equity Action Plan to track progress on key measures in the County;

Second, since 1982, Arlington County has published an annual statistical fact book of Arlington County (the [Profile](#)). The Profile combines countywide data sources and provides a comprehensive outlook of the most current data on population, housing, employment, development, transportation, and community services. The Profile data are used to obtain an understanding of community; for planning future services and needs; to guide policy decisions; and to secure grant funding. Through 2019, the Profile provided this information in a fairly static manner. The release of Profile 2020 included an [interactive dashboard](#) including population, housing and jobs by planning corridor which staff developed in late 2019.

These two actions, perhaps deemed unrelated at the time, set the stage for Arlington County to develop a more robust way to visualize its multitude of data points through a racial equity lens.

### Program Overview

In 2021, building from experience with dashboards, staff interest in the Power BI application, and data from the 2019 American Community Survey from the U.S. Census Bureau, Arlington County's Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development (CPHD) released two dashboards that organized Arlington's demographic data at the countywide and subcounty levels. The [Race & Ethnicity Dashboard](#) (2021) offers the ability to compare 22 key demographic variables of Arlington's population by race and ethnicity. The [Census Tract Demographic Dashboard](#) allows users to discover the variations in demographics throughout Arlington at the census tract level. These interactive dashboards allow users to drill down into demographic data to discover snapshots of racial equity – and inequity – in Arlington.

In 2022, Arlington County updated its major racial equity tools: two demographic dashboards and the [Racial History Timeline](#). As stated, the Race & Ethnicity Dashboard tracks, analyzes, and displays the 22 key demographic and socioeconomic variables by race and ethnicity and provides a snapshot of racial equity (or inequity) in Arlington. While the front page of the [2022 dashboard](#) closely mirrored the 2021

dashboard (a snapshot of the variables), the remainder of the tool presented changes between 2010 and 2020, and splits the variables thematically by demographic, household, and labor force data.

Additionally, maps showing geographic shifts in population were introduced.

During 2023, Arlington debuted two additional dashboards to further our understanding of the complexities associated with racial equity and inequities. The [CPHD Population and Demographic Estimates Dashboard](#) provides demographic profiles of Arlington’s civic associations, which do not align to U.S. Census Bureau geographies. The dashboard enhances the County’s population estimates, found in the annual Profile, by applying U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey estimates at the housing unit level and summarizing population for civic associations.

To provide a quick overview of Arlington’s affordable housing effort, the County unveiled the [Affordable Housing Dashboard](#), an interactive tool providing information on progress in realizing the goals, objectives and policies of the [Affordable Housing Master Plan](#). Highlights of the dashboard include a housing overview and information on housing supply, committed affordable housing, renter assistance, ending homelessness, affordability and Average Median Income. It also includes the context for affordable housing in Arlington, an analysis of current and future housing needs, and the affordable housing policy.

Additionally, in 2023, Arlington continued to update and refine its Race & Ethnicity Dashboard and the Census Tract Demographic Dashboard allowing users to view data in a visual and even more interactive manner. All three dashboards will continue to receive annual updates with the most recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

### Program Staffing & Funding

All dashboards were developed within existing work programs. No additional staff or funds were required to realize this program.

## Program Results

The development of these dashboards marked the beginning of Arlington’s efforts to create a more fulsome picture of inequitable outcomes. With [Arlington County’s Equity Framework](#), underpinned by the Equity Resolution, new policy, project, and program reviews will consider how Arlington explicitly or inadvertently exacerbates racial disparities among residents and employees. Tools like these dashboards and other disaggregated data serve as a resource to document those differences, which will help realize the vision of an equitable Arlington where all are valued, educated, healthy, and safe, regardless of race.

These dashboards are by no means a complete picture of Arlington County’s intricate tapestry rather they display individual snapshots of Arlington’s White, Black or African American, Asian, Multiracial and Combine Populations (people who identify as American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, Other, or Two or more races), and Hispanic or Latino Origin populations, while also providing:

- Context to understand disparities and differences in people’s lived experience in Arlington.
- A baseline from which to measure racial equity — closing the gaps so that race does not predict one’s success in any area of life.
- A resource/tool that can be applied as an equity lens when making decisions and considering policies, procedures, programs using the five questions:
  1. Who benefits?
  2. Who is burdened?
  3. Who is missing?
  4. How do we know?
  5. What do we do?

This information will spur conversations about inequity and serve as a starting point for deeper analysis on a variety of topics.

In fact, several Arlington County departments have used disaggregated data and information from the dashboards to inform policy, program evaluation, engagement strategies, and implementation,

including: the [Vision Zero](#) program (Department of Environmental Services), the [Missing Middle Housing Study](#) (CPHD), and the upcoming work on Arlington's Comprehensive Plan (CPHD).

Further, through presentations at local (commissions, civic associations and other community stakeholder groups), regional (Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments – MWCOCG) and national (the American Planning Association National Conference in 2023), Arlington County staff have instructed hundreds of individuals in how to use the easily accessible information about Arlington. With this proactive instruction, the number of data requests has been reduced and the number of citations from our dashboards at public meetings has increased.

### Model Program

While the layout and style of the dashboards are tailored for Arlington, the underlying Power BI framework can be adaptable for other localities. Other jurisdictions, including one Virginia county, have contacted us to learn about the dashboards, understand how the data is linked and how best they may develop a dashboard for their community. In addition, Arlington shared the Race and Ethnicity Dashboard with the University of Virginia (UVA) as part of its [Social Impact Data Commons](#) project. Arlington's methodology, selected variables and overall format comported with UVA's vision for a regional data commons to understand and address social challenges.

### Awards Criteria

Arlington County's Data-Driven Dashboard project is worthy of a VACO Achievement Award – touching upon three of the ten program categories – Communications, Community and Economic Development, and Information Technology. In using these data-driven dashboards, we have applied technology to assist us in understanding racial equity (and inequities) as we update practices and policies aligned with Arlington's Equity Resolution, Equity Framework and recently adopted Regional Principles for Equitable Development. Using Power BI, the dashboards are quickly updated with current U.S.

Census Bureau data to provide clear and accessible information about Arlington County – a framework replicable for other localities.

Attachments | Static Images of Arlington’s Data-Driven Dashboards

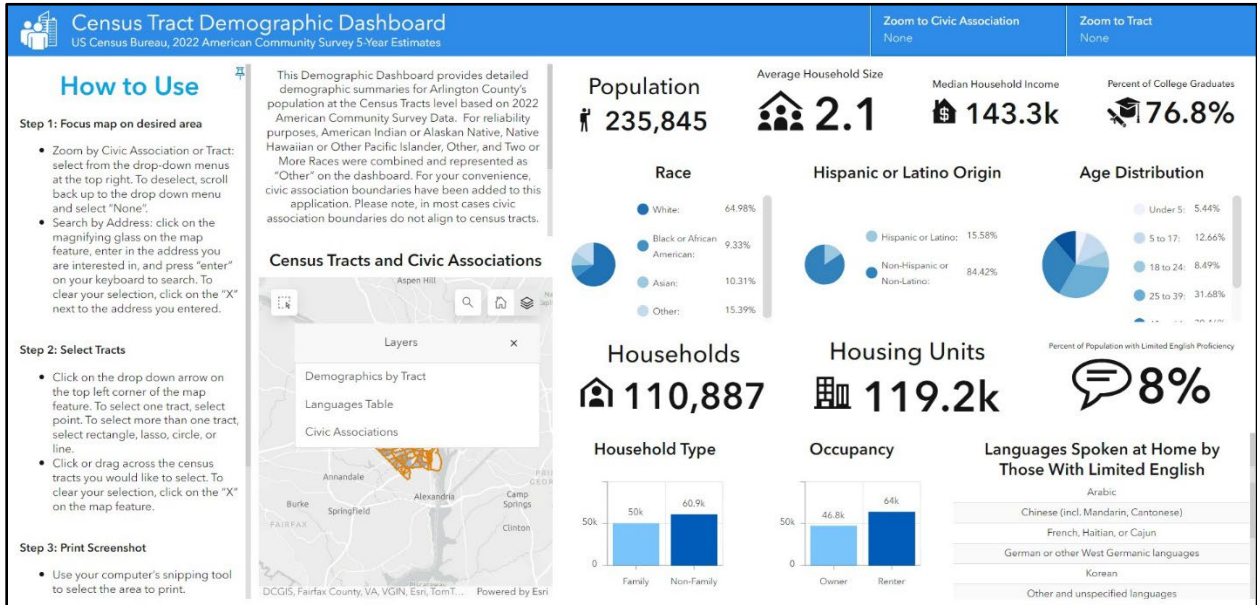


Figure 1: Census Tract Demographic Dashboard

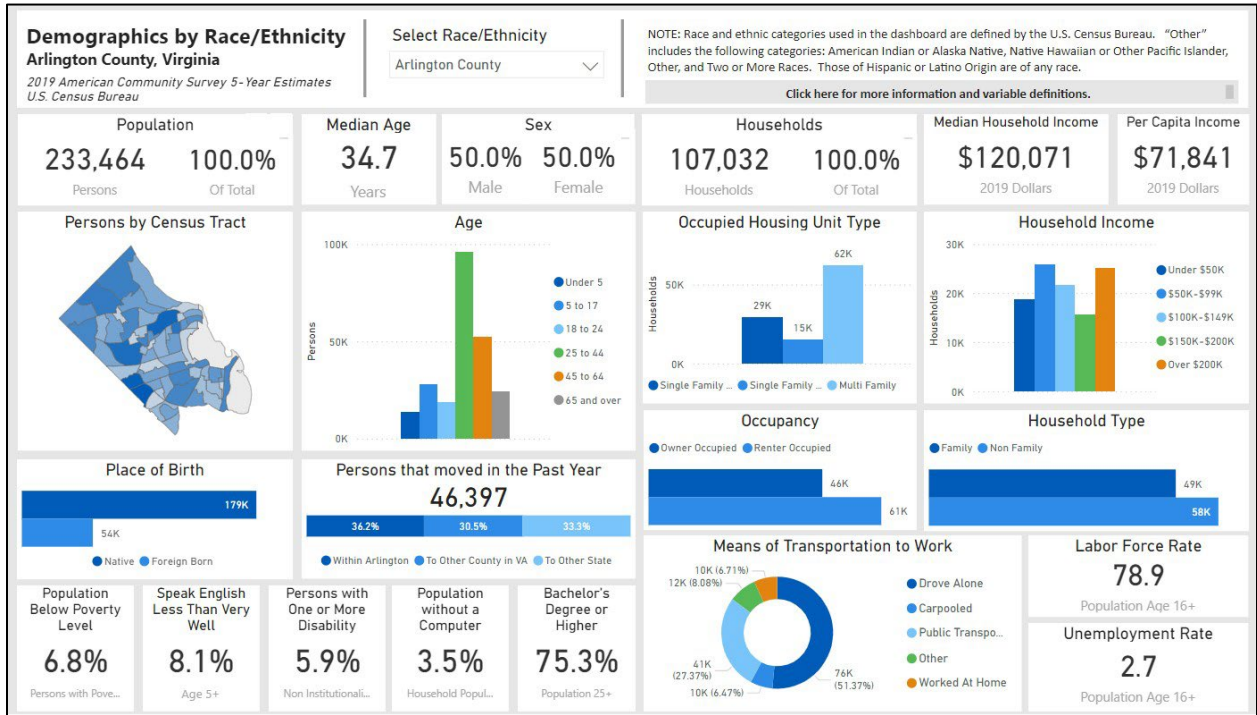


Figure 2: Race & Ethnicity Dashboard (2021)



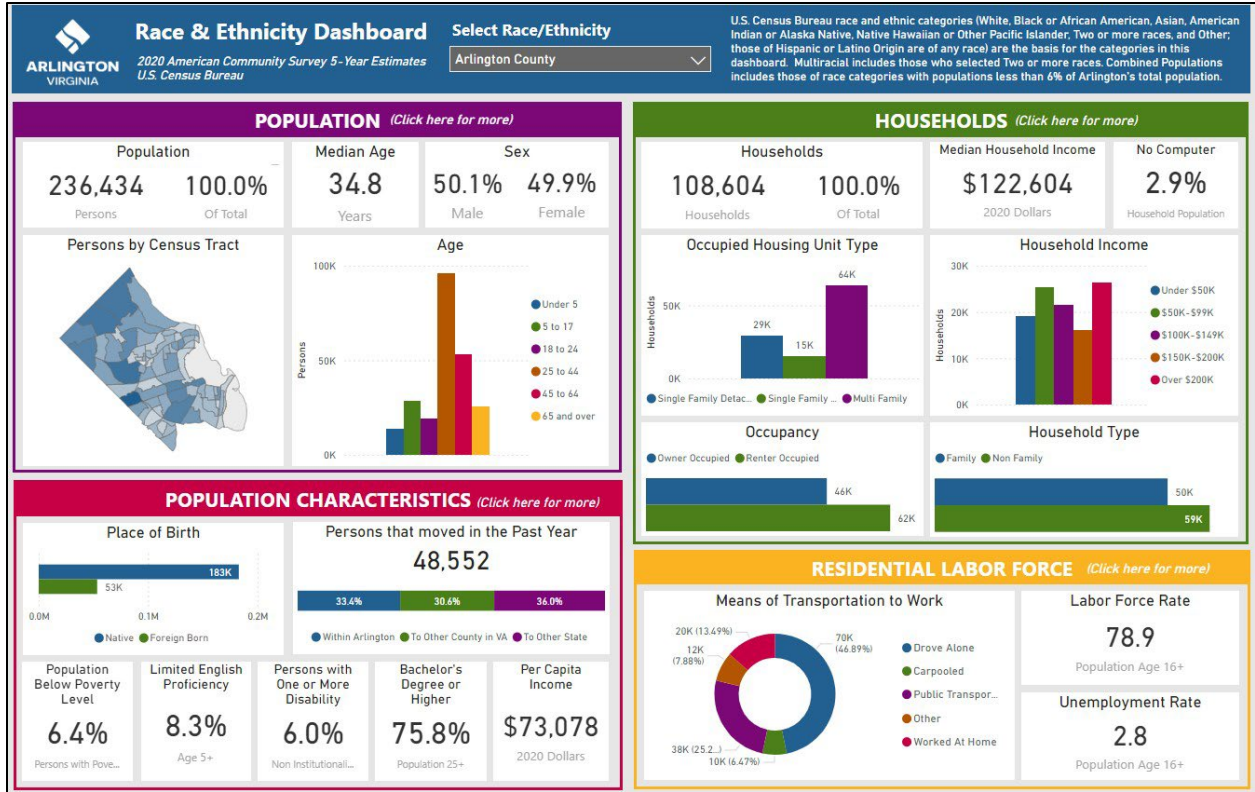
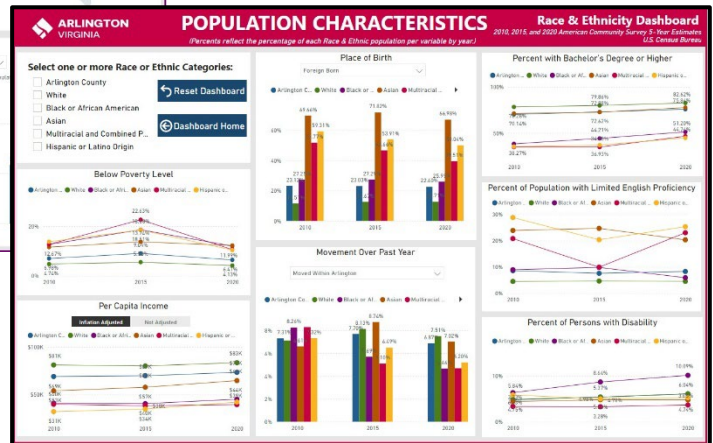


Figure 3: Race & Ethnicity Dashboard Home Page (2022)



Figure 4: Race & Ethnicity Dashboard Expanded Pages (2022)



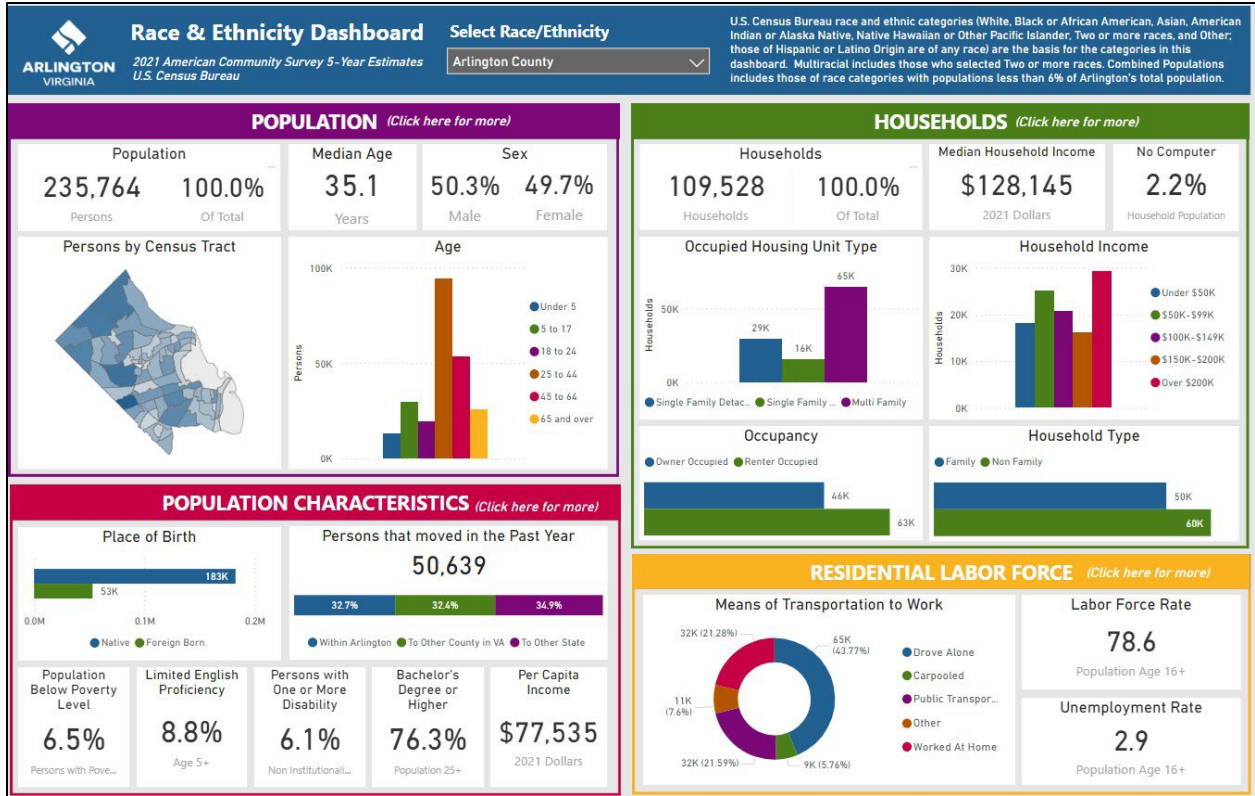


Figure 5: Race & Ethnicity Dashboard Home Page (2023)

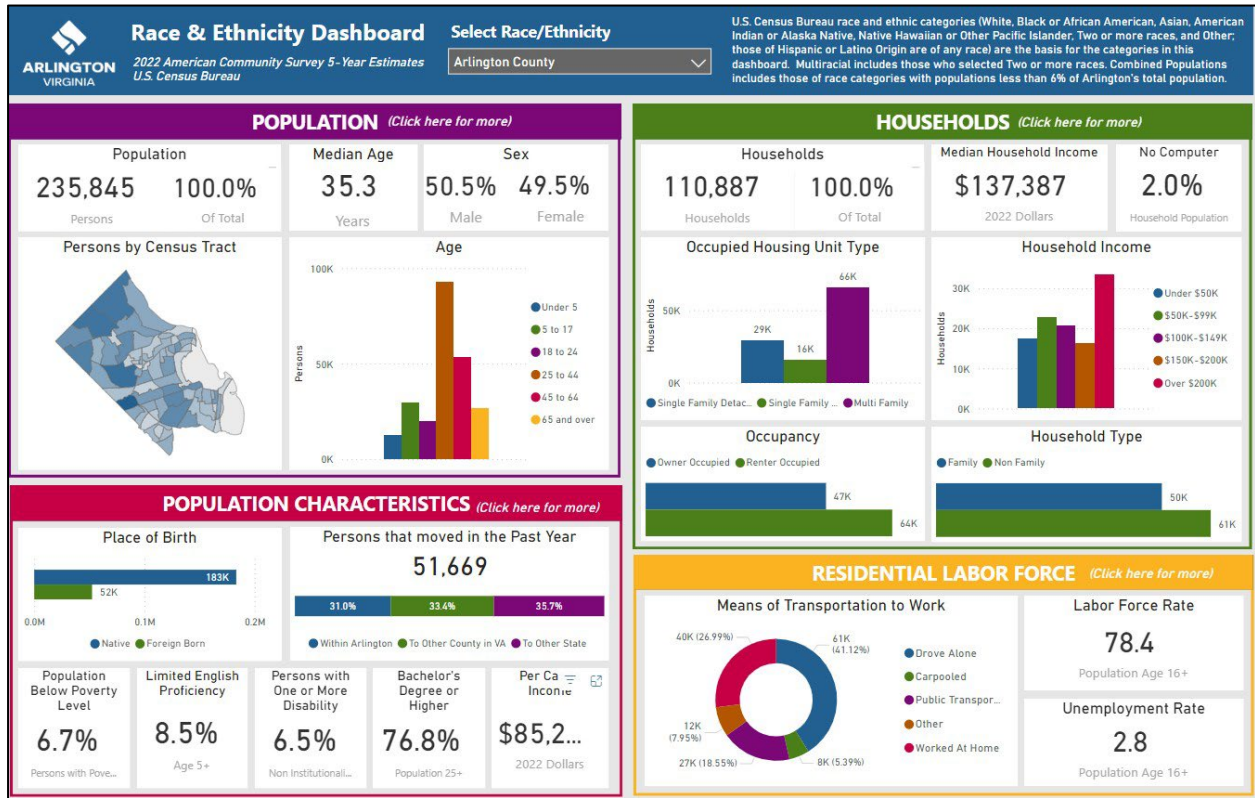


Figure 6: Race & Ethnicity Dashboard Home Page (2024)



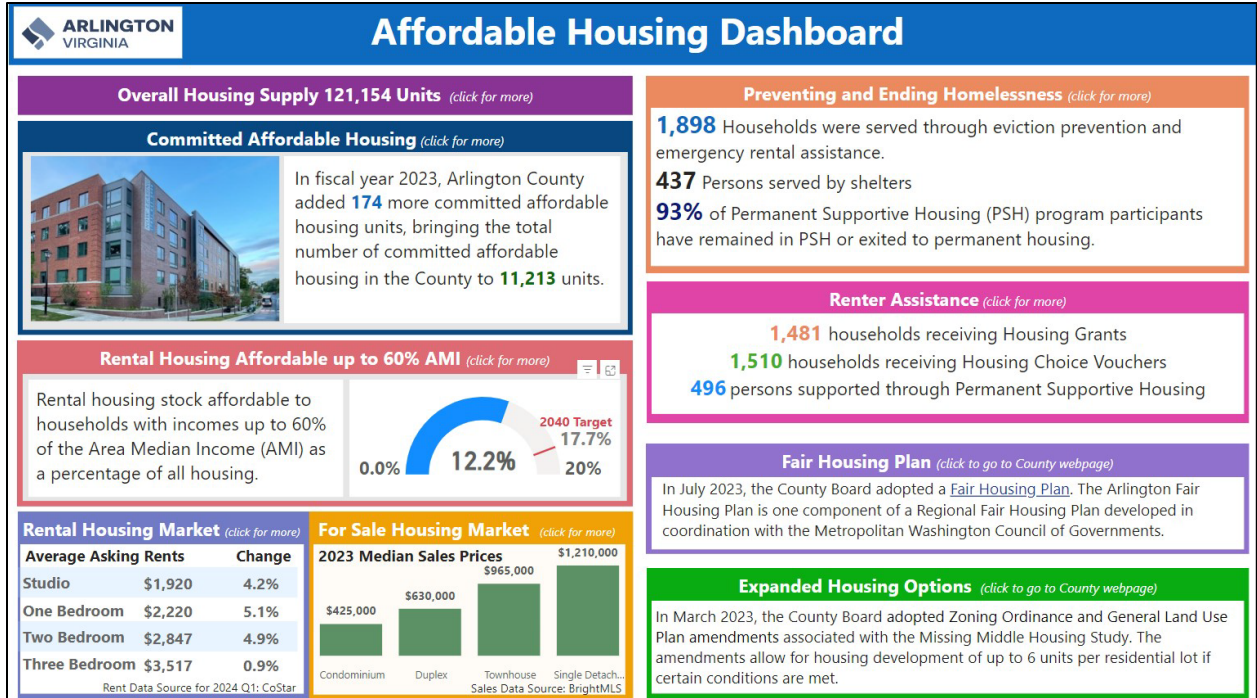


Figure 7: Affordable Housing Dashboard Home Page

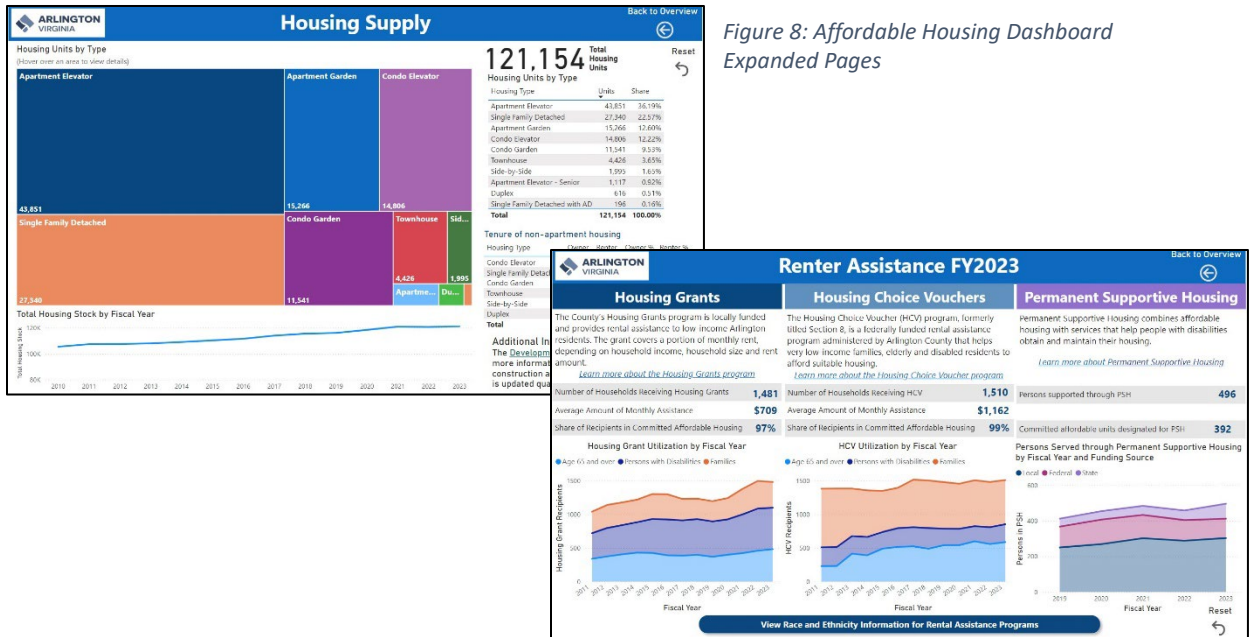


Figure 8: Affordable Housing Dashboard Expanded Pages