The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is a federal tax credit designed to boost the income of individuals working in low-wage jobs. The credit has been proven to reduce poverty, encourage work, support the cognitive development of children, and disproportionately benefit communities of color. Virginia is one of six states in the country with a non-refundable EITC structure, which is less beneficial to low-income families. Thus, the Commonwealth could make significant progress by allowing localities to create county and city-level EITC programs.

Arlington County has the lowest SNAP utilization rate of any jurisdiction in the Food Bank's service area in Northern Virginia, with just 30% of eligible individuals participating in the program. This leaves an estimated $22 million going unused annually. Similarly, based on IRS data and the Commonwealth’s EITC utilization rate, we estimate that nearly 2,200 county residents missed out on more than $4.3 million total in 2018. After conversations with advocates, policymakers, governmental administrators, and clients, we believe the county could and should activate millions of dollars in federal social welfare by hiring a full-time staffer to increase synergy between federal, state, and local governments and ongoing community-based utilization efforts; to implement and negotiate data-sharing agreements; and to incorporate research-oriented practices into existing and newly created outreach practices.

We request that the county invest in a strategic and coordinated effort to strengthen inter-programmatic utilization efforts and increase participation in social safety net programs.

**Request Dillon Rule Legislation to Allow Localities in Commonwealth to Create Earned Income Tax Credit Programs**

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We recommend the county include a request to the Virginia delegation for Dillon Rule legislation that would allow Arlington County to create these programs and help lift low-income residents out of poverty.

**Create a Full-Time Position or Workload to Synergize and Leverage Federal Resources and Programs**

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We request that the county invest in a strategic and coordinated effort to strengthen inter-programmatic utilization efforts and increase participation in social safety net programs.
Implement ‘Health in All Policies’ Approach to Governance

“Health in All Policies” (HiAP), as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is “a collaborative approach that integrates and articulates health considerations into policymaking across sectors to improve the health of all communities and people.” As social determinants of health, food security and nutrition are central to the HiAP strategy, the Public Health Institute’s Guide for State and Local Governments provides an excellent platform to begin the process of adopting an HiAP approach. We also recommend the consideration of a similar position to that of Fairfax County’s Health in All Policies Manager for greater coordination of data, collaborative practices, and strategic integration.

We request that the county implement an HiAP approach by incorporating health and wellness considerations into daily governance, administration, and programmatic work.

In the last ten years, the Capital Area Food Bank has distributed 3,714,281 meals to food insecure clients in Arlington County.