



**EDUCATION**

**NEEDS ASSESSMENT 2020-2023**

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## EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION & CHILDCARE

### Access to Childcare

In most U.S. families, all of the adults work. Fewer than one-in-three children today have a full-time, stay-at-home parent. In 1975, only a generation ago, more than half of all children had a stay-at-home parent—usually the mother.<sup>1</sup> This could be a contributing factor to communities seeing more of a shortfall in access to childcare than they might have 20-30 years ago.

Because most parents work outside the home, most children under 5 years old receive childcare from someone other than a parent. Almost one quarter (23.4%) of children under the age of 5 are in some form of organized childcare arrangement, which includes day care centers, nurseries and preschools. This includes one third (33%) of those with an employed mother and more than one quarter (28.6%) of those whose mothers are not employed but are in school.<sup>2</sup>

Childcare is a common family necessity: two thirds of Virginia’s children under age 5 have all available parents working outside the home. For these families, childcare ideally supports household economic stability as well as healthy child development, but available options do not always align to support both. Ultimately, families tend to prioritize cost, convenience and hours in making their childcare selections.<sup>3</sup>

Child Trends defines access to childcare as requiring that care be (1) easy to find and reasonably geographically close, (2) affordable, (3) supportive of children’s healthy development and (4) able to meet parents’ needs and desires.<sup>4</sup>

There are about three formal childcare seats for every four children under age 5 in Virginia.<sup>5</sup> A pattern generally holds statewide—rural or lower income communities rely more heavily on public programs to provide accessible care. In Virginia, key gaps in availability of care include options for infants and toddlers, formal private care in rural areas, before and after care (i.e., care beyond preschool hours) and inclusive care for children with disabilities.<sup>6</sup>

Many areas of Virginia have been identified as “childcare deserts,” meaning they have inadequate childcare opportunities for the number of children who live there. In 2018, the

<sup>1</sup> Sarah Jane Glynn, “The New Breadwinners: 2010 Update” (Washington: Center for American Progress 2012).

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, Table 1b. Child Care Arrangements of Preschoolers Living with Mother, by Employment Status of Mother and Selected Characteristics: Spring 2010 (Department of Commerce, 2011).

<sup>3</sup> Bipartisan Policy Center, “A Bipartisan Case for Early Childhood Development,” October 2017. <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/BPC-A-Bipartisan-Case-For-Early-Childhood-Development.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Anne Partika, “Providing Access to Child Care Means More than Providing Enough Slots,” Child Trends Blog, July 6, 2017. <https://www.childtrends.org/providing-access-child-care-means-providing-enough-seat>.

<sup>5</sup> These figures are a rough estimate based on public program fall enrollment (2018), Head Start funded capacity (2017-2018), and total capacity of any private childcare program that is licensed, registered, or exempt through and serves children under the age of five. Private programs may serve a range of ages—such as age 0-12 for a home-based 105 Commonwealth of Virginia Preschool Development Grant, Birth through Five Needs Assessment program—and there is no way to count only the private seats that are available to children under age 5. Thus, the estimates likely overestimate formal private capacity for children under age 5, and do not estimate the extent of informal care arrangements.

<sup>6</sup> Preschool Development Grant, Birth through Five Needs Assessment, Commonwealth of Virginia. Produced by Communities Consulting, July 2019.

Center for American Progress conducted a detailed estimate of childcare deserts in communities across the United States, defining childcare deserts as “any census tract with more than 50 children under age 5 that contains either no childcare providers or so few options that there are more than three times as many children as licensed childcare seats.” Their analysis of Virginia found that 47% of Virginians live in a childcare desert, including 50% of Hispanic/Latino families, 61% of people in low-income neighborhoods and 63% of rural families.<sup>7</sup> **In our community Page County is classified as a Childcare Desert.**<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that local sources indicate that the number of childcare providers who accept the DSS childcare benefits has dropped precipitously since the state’s imposition of higher standards for such providers. As a result, Shenandoah County, for instance, has parents who have to drive their children to Warren County or Harrisonburg for childcare then return to Shenandoah for work every day.

In Figure 2.1 it’s estimated that there are 14,138 children under the age of 5 in our community, and only an estimated 6,923 childcare spots available for them, leaving almost 7,000 who may potentially need childcare without access to it.

**Figure 2.1: Child Day Care Capacity Estimates**

	Population Under 5 (2018 Population Estimates) <sup>9</sup>	Licensed		Unlicensed		Combined
		Child Day Care Facilities <sup>10</sup>	Child Day Care Capacity	Child Day Care Facilities	Child Day Care Capacity	Estimated Shortfall
Clarke County	679	8	398	2	30	-251
Frederick County	5,426	14	951	12	1,261	-3,214
Page County	1,251	4	136	4	140	-975
Shenandoah County	2,493	14	452	10	508	-1,533
Warren County	2,416	9	774	4	321	-1,321
City of Winchester	1,873	14	1,363	8	589	79
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,138</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>4,074</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>2,849</b>	<b>-7,215</b>

Not all child day care programs in Virginia are required to be licensed. A child day care program in Virginia refers to a regularly operating service arrangement for children where, during the absence of a parent or guardian, a person or organization has agreed to assume responsibility for the supervision, protection and well-being of a child under the age of 13 for

<sup>7</sup> Preschool Development Grant, Birth through Five Needs Assessment, Commonwealth of Virginia. Produced by Communitas Consulting, July 2019.  
<sup>8</sup> U.S. Census Bureau 2013-2017 American Community Survey estimates, Table B01001, and childcare capacity determined from fall 2018 public preschool enrollment reported by the Virginia Department of Education and private programs reported by the Virginia Department of Social Services in winter 2019.  
<sup>9</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Selected Age Groups by Sex for the United States, States, Counties, and Puerto Rico Commonwealth and Municipals: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2018, 2018 Population Estimates.  
<sup>10</sup> Virginia Department of Social Services. 2019. Licensed Child Day Care. Last retrieved September 2019 from <http://www.dss.virginia.gov>

less than a 24-hour period. There are two types of child day care programs: out-of-home care (center-based) and in-home care (family-based) in a private home.

These two types of care can be further broken down into:

- Licensed
- Unlicensed (but regulated)
- Approved; and
- Unlicensed and Unregistered

**Licensed** child day care programs are inspected at least twice per year. They have requirements for background checks, training/orientation, and health and safety.

Note: Some programs offering child day care obtain a general business license to operate from the county within which they do business; however, that license is not the same as a child day care license obtained from the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS), which holds the child day care provider accountable to the health and safety standards set forth by the Commonwealth of Virginia.

**Unlicensed but regulated** child day care programs vary in their requirements.

- *Voluntarily registered family day homes* are required to be inspected prior to certification and every two years thereafter, to complete background checks, and meet certain health and safety standards.
- *Religiously exempt child day centers* are required to complete background checks and must self-certify annually that the program is in compliance with background checks and health and safety requirements.
- *Certified preschools* are operated by an accredited private school and are required to complete background checks and must self-certify prior to certification, and annually thereafter, regarding criminal record clearances on all employees, a list of staff qualifications, and health and fire inspection reports.

Religiously exempt child day centers and certified preschool programs are not inspected by VDSS unless there is a complaint.

**Approved** child day care programs are regulated by an entity other than VDSS. These programs include certain Northern Virginia localities - Arlington, Alexandria and Fairfax who have the authority to approve by local ordinance certain family day homes and child day centers.

**Unlicensed and unregistered** child day care programs **do not** have any of the following requirements: background checks, training/orientation, or health and safety requirements, and only minimal Code of Virginia requirements. Unlicensed centers must meet an exemption in the Code of Virginia in § [63.2-1715](#). Unlicensed family day homes must follow requirements in §§ [63.2-1727](#) and [63.2-1704.1](#) of the Code. **VDSS does not inspect these programs.**<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Virginia Department of Social Services, <https://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cc/>

According to the People, Inc. 2018 Needs Assessment, availability of childcare is an issue in many cities across the country experiencing population growth and in rural communities with few providers. In the People, Inc. service area, 52% of registered providers offer full-time licensed care. However, there are even fewer providers for newborns less than 1 year old. Only 39% of providers offer licensed newborn care. Across all areas, respondents commented on the lack of childcare for individuals who work other than traditional work hours. This may include manufacturing workers or healthcare professionals who work nights, or those who work retail or restaurant jobs that might have evening shifts. When extended childcare hours are available, they often cost more than standard daytime hours.<sup>12</sup>

In the study done by the Commonwealth of Virginia (Preschool Development Grant), interviews with families revealed that hours of care and transportation issues were barriers to accessibility. For families to participate in programs that have limited transportation and after-care hours, parents must have the flexibility to drop off and pick up children during the traditional workday. In our community, many businesses work shift hours that require at least one parent to work outside normal business hours. In single-headed households this can be even more challenging. As a result of limited hours and transportation requirements, many programs can be inaccessible to some families.

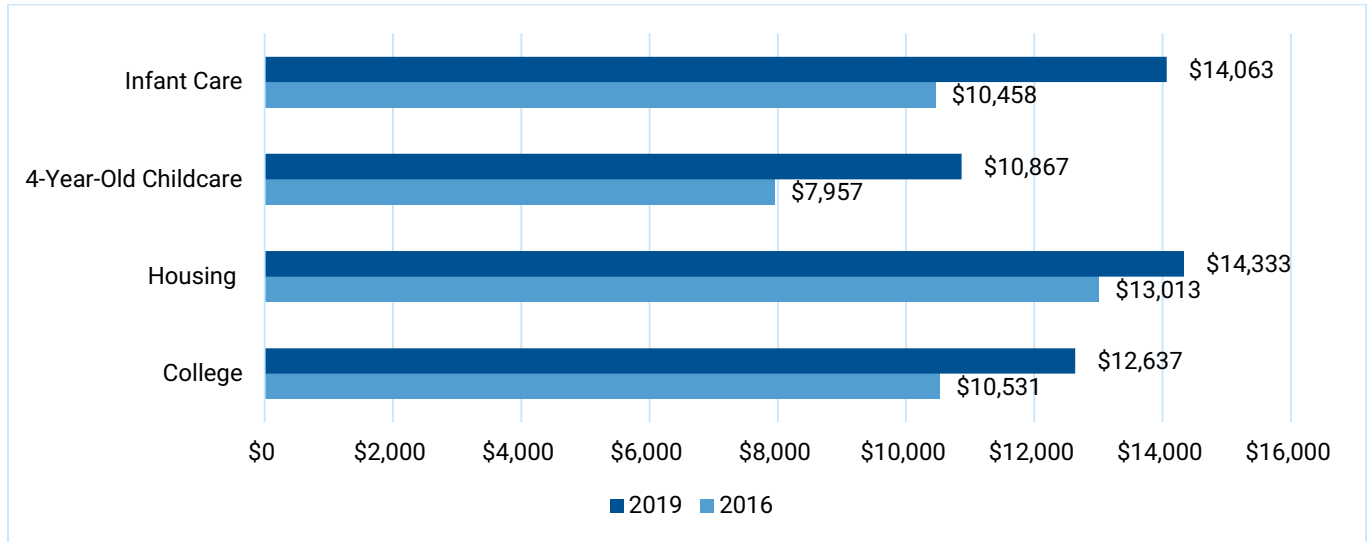
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<sup>12</sup> People Inc., 2018 Community Needs Assessment

## Affordable Childcare

The economic policy institute released statistics on the cost of childcare in Virginia. The average cost of infant childcare is \$14,063 per year (an increase of \$3,605 from 2016, 34.4% increase), or \$1,172 per month (an increase of \$300 from 2016); childcare for a 4 year old costs \$10,867 per year (an increase of \$2,910 from 2016, 36.5% increase), or \$663 per month (an increase of \$243). According to the study, Virginia is ranked 10<sup>th</sup> out of 50 States and the District of Columbia for the most expensive childcare.

**Figure 2.2 Family Expenses - Comparison<sup>13</sup>**



<sup>13</sup> Economic Policy Institute, The Cost of Child Care in Virginia, July 2019, <https://www.epi.org/child-care-costs-in-the-united-states/#/VA>

Figure 2.3: Average Childcare Costs by County, 2018<sup>14</sup>

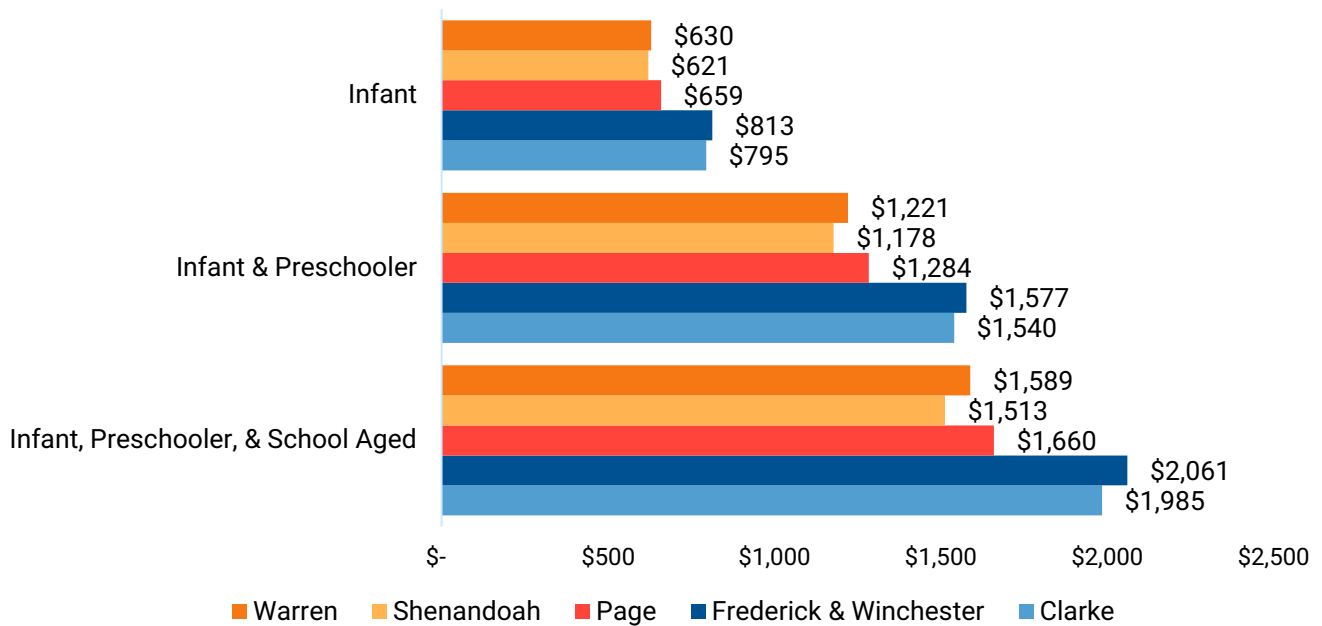
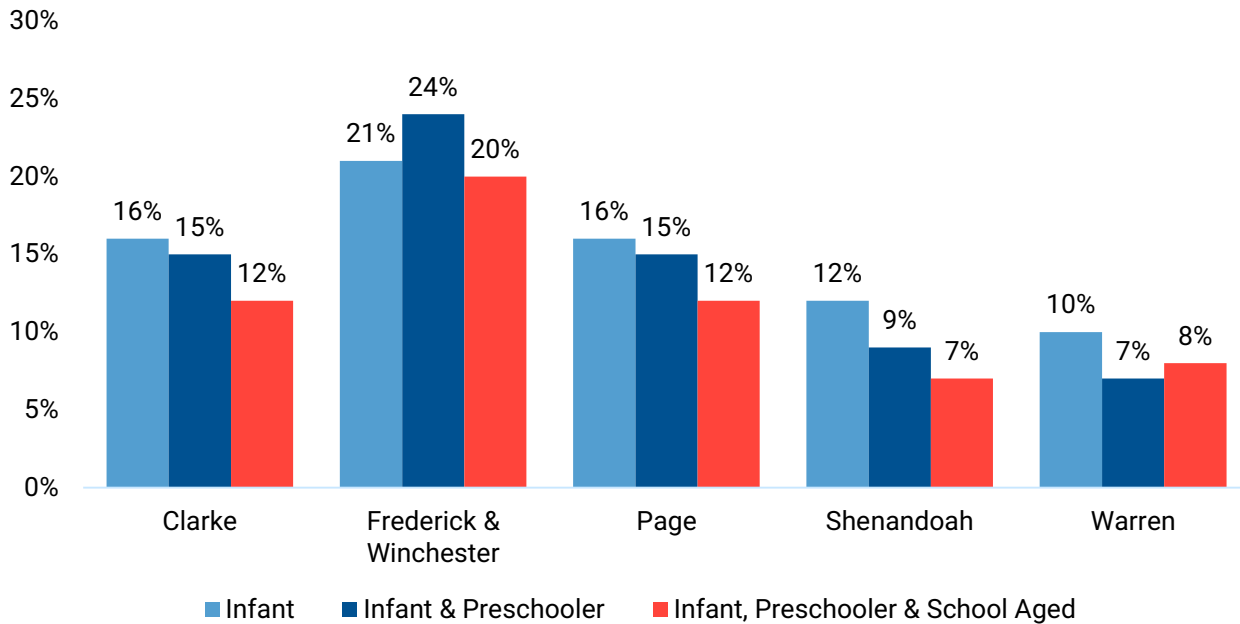


Figure 2.4: Average Increase in Childcare Costs by County 2012 to 2018<sup>15</sup>



Childcare is one of the biggest expense’s families face. Infant care in Virginia costs 11.3% more per year than in-state tuition for a four-year public college. That makes Virginia one of the

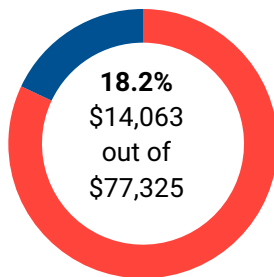
<sup>14</sup> Center for Women’s Welfare, University of Washington, Self-Sufficiency Standard for Virginia, 2018  
<sup>15</sup> Center for Women’s Welfare, University of Washington, Self-Sufficiency Standard for Virginia, 2012 & 2018



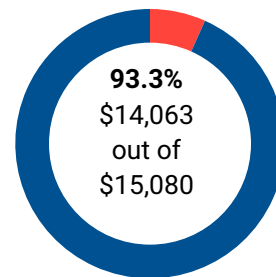
33 states and DC where infant care is more expensive than college. In Virginia, infant care costs just 1.9% less than average rent.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), childcare is affordable if it costs no more than 7% of a family’s income (this decreased by 3% from the 2016 study which had affordability at 10% of a family’s income). By this standard, only 11.1% of Virginians can afford infant care (this is down 24.5% from 2016 when 35.6% of Virginians could afford infant care). For a median-income family, childcare costs account for 18.2% of their income (this compares to 13.7% as of the 2016 study). For a minimum-wage family, childcare costs could be upwards of 93.3% of their income (this compares to 69.4% as of the 2016 study). A minimum-wage worker in Virginia would need to work full time for 48 weeks, or from January to December, just to pay for childcare for one infant.

Median Income Family



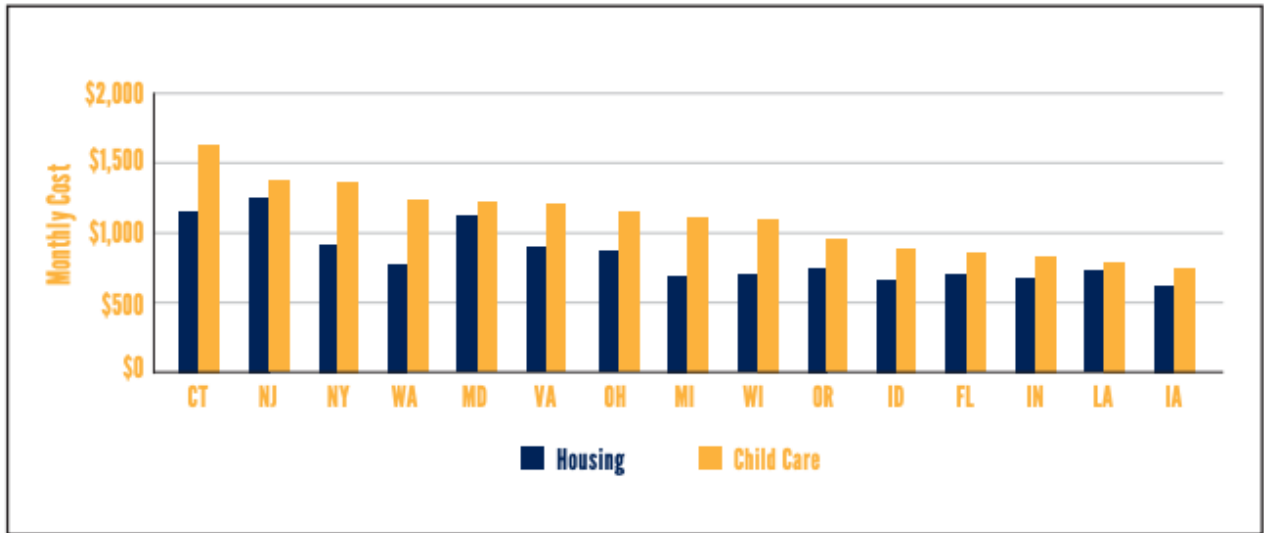
Minimum Wage Worker



For many ALICE families, quality childcare and early education remain out of reach. In fact, the cost of two children in family-based childcare is more expensive than housing in every state in the United Way ALICE Project (see introduction for information on the ALICE Project). The cost of a licensed childcare center is even higher.

Figure 2.5 Cost of Housing vs. Childcare, Household Survival Budget, 2014<sup>16</sup>

The below graphic illustrates the cost of childcare in comparison with the cost of housing for families in a variety of states. In all states, childcare was more costly than housing.



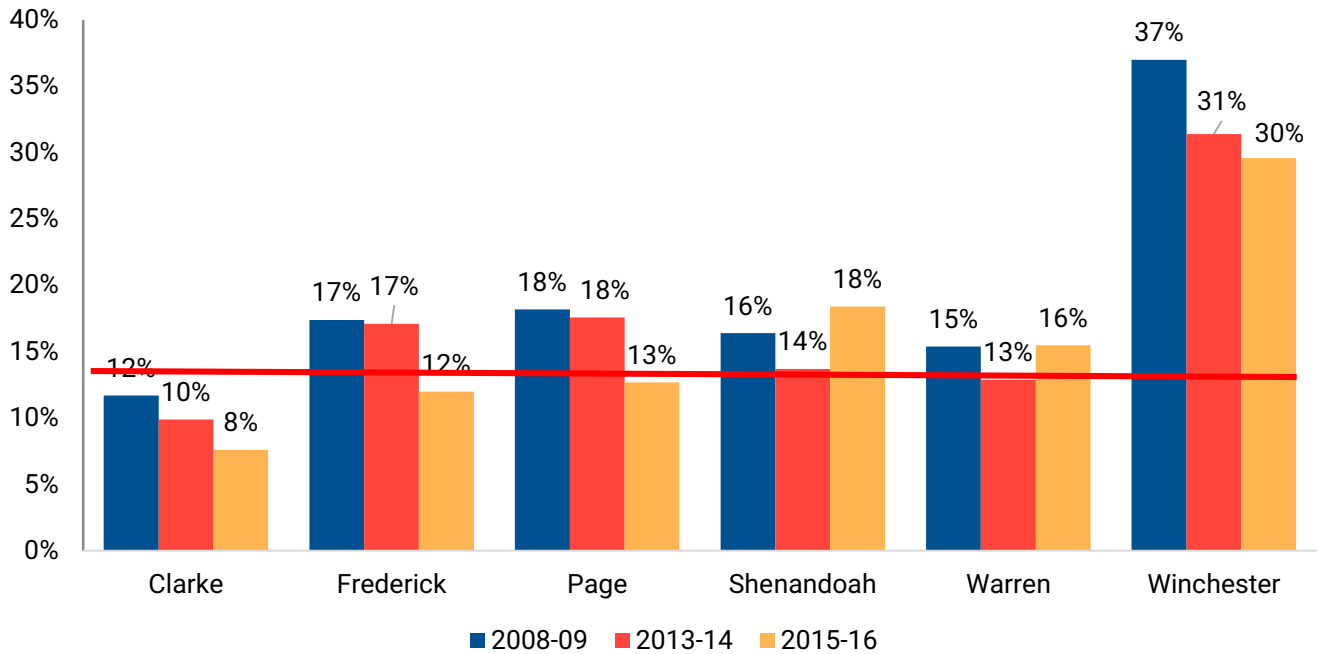
Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), 2014a; and state child care agencies, 2014

<sup>16</sup> ALICE® Consequences of Insufficient Household Income, 2017, [http://ouw.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/17UWALICE%20Report\\_NCR\\_11.27.17\\_Lowres.pdf](http://ouw.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/17UWALICE%20Report_NCR_11.27.17_Lowres.pdf)

## Kindergarten Readiness Levels

The PALS-K (phonological awareness literacy screening) assessment is used to identify kindergarten students who are relatively behind in their acquisition of fundamental literacy skills.

**Figure 2.6: Percentage of Kindergarteners below Readiness Levels<sup>17</sup>**



The red line indicates the State of Virginia average for 2015-2016 of 13.8%.

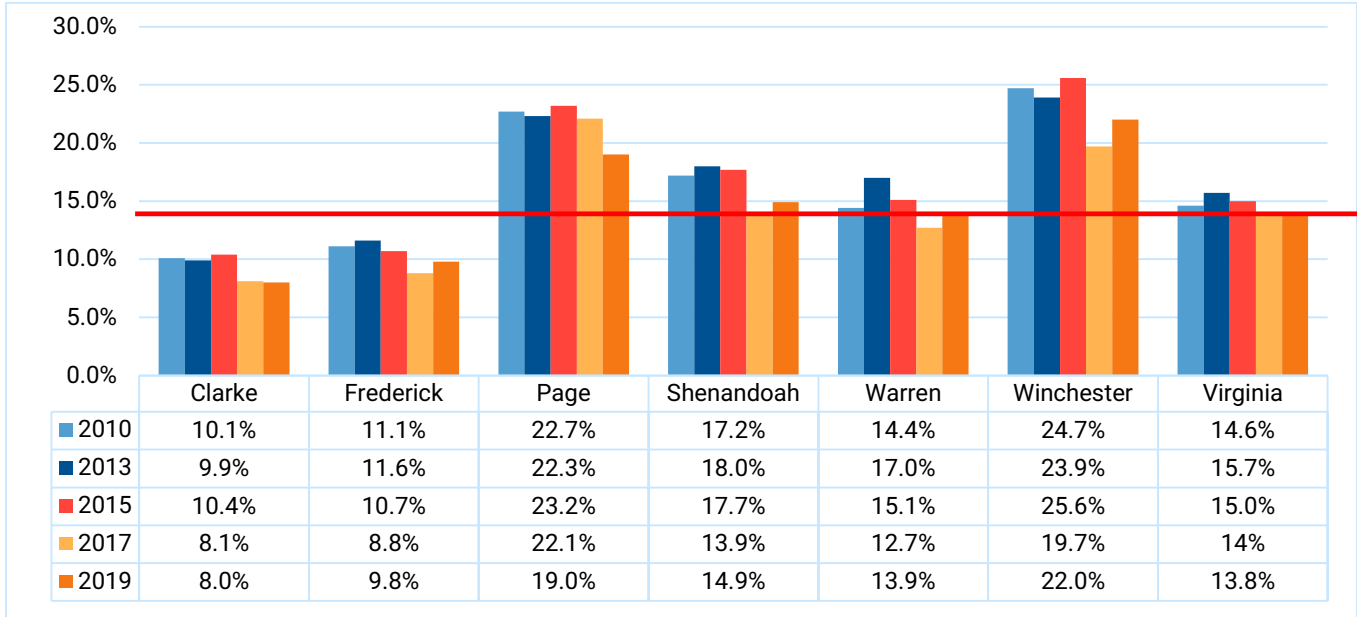
<sup>17</sup> Kids Count Data Center - PALS data collected by Virginia for 2008-09, 2013-14 & 2015-16

## ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGE

### Children in Poverty

Data from the U.S. Census Bureau documents the percentage of children in poverty. The percentage of children living in poverty decreased across all geographies when compared to 2015 percentages. Page County and the City of Winchester still had higher percentages of childhood poverty than the state average of Virginia which is at 14%.

**Figure 2.7: Percent of Children (0-17 years) Living Below 100% Poverty<sup>18</sup>**



The red line represents the State of Virginia percentage for 2019 of 13.8%.

According to 2018 Census information, the actual number of children in poverty for each jurisdiction is estimated as follows: Clarke County – 541 (559 in 2017), Frederick County – 1,382 (1,076 in 2017), Page County – 1,339 (1,176 in 2017), Shenandoah County – 1,244 (1,031 in 2017), Warren County – 1,252 (1,204 in 2017), City of Winchester – 1,457 (1,160 in 2017)<sup>19</sup>.

According to 2020 school year data (collected as of March 2020 from each jurisdiction), the number of students who are considered homeless is as follows: Clarke County – 11 (.5%), Frederick County Public Schools – 255, Shenandoah County Public Schools – 35 (1%), Warren County – 54 (about 1%), Winchester City Public Schools – 192.

<sup>18</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) Program. Source data is the American Community Survey, Virginia Department of Social Services, Locality Profile, 2019, <https://www.census.gov/data-tools/demo/saipe/>

<sup>19</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Poverty Status in the Past 12 months, 2013-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The McKinney-Vento Act defines homeless children and youths as individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence.<sup>20</sup>

This definition also includes:

- Children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship or a similar reason\*
- Children and youths who may be living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, shelters
- Children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings
- Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are children who are living in similar circumstances listed above

\*Per Title IX, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act, "awaiting foster-care placement" was removed from the definition of homeless on December 10, 2016; the only exception to this removal is that "covered states" have until December 10, 2017 to remove "awaiting foster-care placement" from their definition of homeless.

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<sup>20</sup> National Center for Homeless Education, <https://nche.ed.gov/mckinney-vento-definition/>

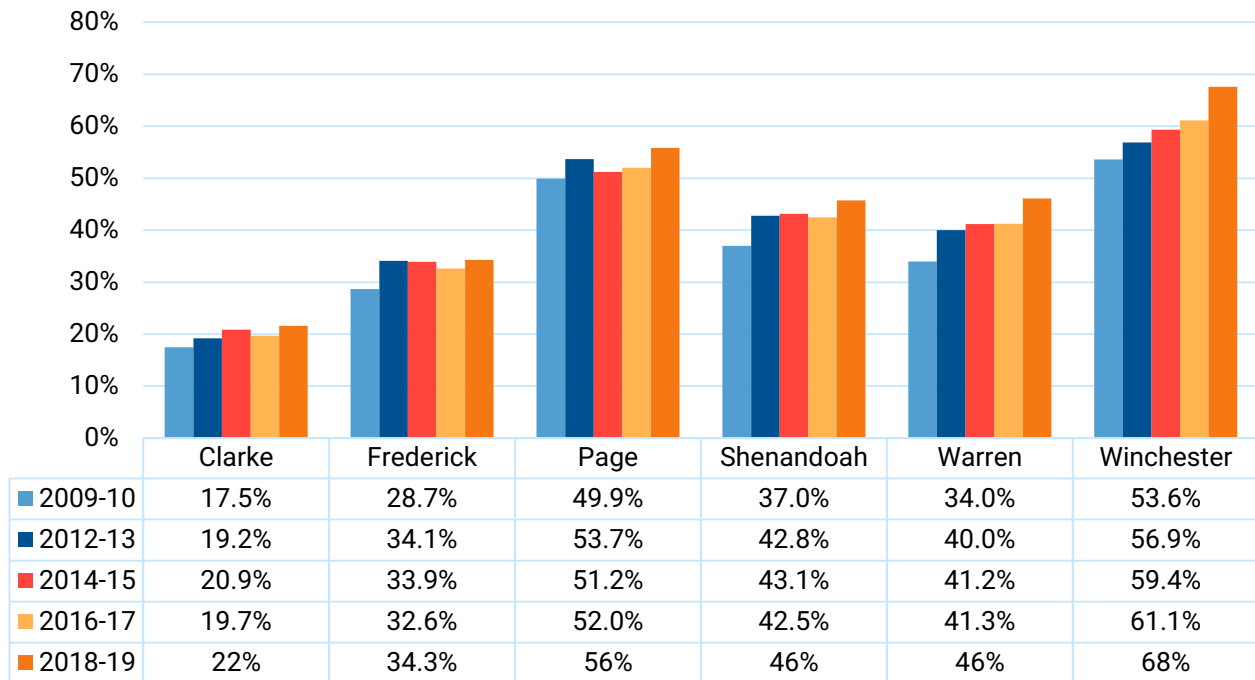
## Children in Free and Reduced Lunch Programs

Virginia Department of Education data on the National School Lunch Program documents the percentage of children eligible for free and reduced lunch.

Studies show that proper nutrition, particularly in the first three years of life, is critical to a child’s physical and emotional development. Unfortunately, food insecurity is an obstacle that threatens that critical foundation. Children from families who are struggling to put food on the table are more likely to repeat a grade in elementary school, experience developmental impairments in language and motor skills, and develop more social and behavioral problems.<sup>21</sup>

All jurisdictions saw an increase in children enrolled in Free/Reduced Lunch Programs when comparing 2016-2017 data to 2018-2019 data.

**Figure 2.8: Children in Free/Reduced Lunch Programs<sup>22</sup>**



Information on the National School Lunch program and eligibility standards can be found by visiting <https://www.fns.usda.gov/nslp/national-school-lunch-program-nslp>

Note: Starting in the 2018-19 academic year, all four Winchester Public Schools elementary schools offered free breakfast and lunch to all of their students, no matter their household income. The free meals are being made possible through the National School Lunch and

<sup>21</sup> Feeding America, Child Hunger in America, <http://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/impact-of-hunger/child-hunger/>

<sup>22</sup> VA Dept. of Education, Office of School of Nutrition Programs (SNP), 2018-2019 Free and Reduced Eligibility Report - SFA Level, Data Reported as of October 31, 2018, Published: January 31, 2019, <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/nutrition/statistics/index.shtml>

Breakfast Program's Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), implemented under the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.

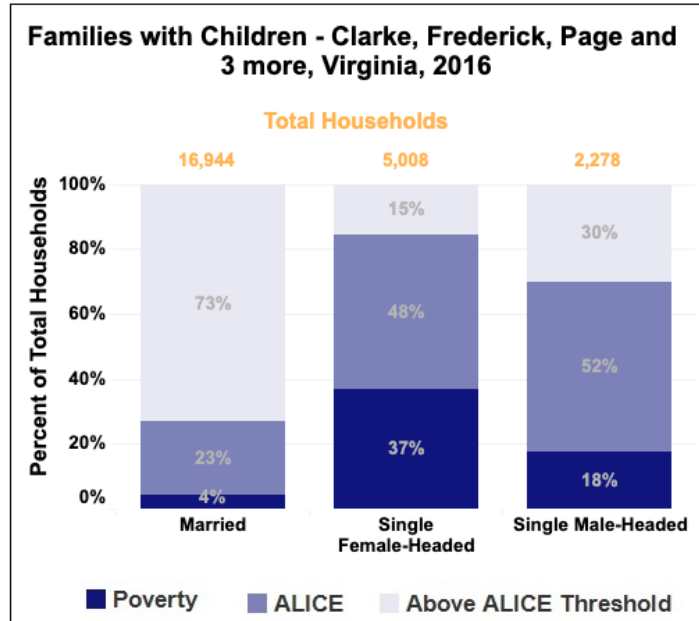
## ALICE® Children

Despite data that indicates that the number of children below the federal poverty level are going down in numbers, it would be safe to assume that trends seen nationwide when it comes to low unemployment and more families working would lead to the conclusion that while many children no longer fall into the category of “poverty,” many in fact still do not have the necessities needed in order to succeed. The previous page that indicates that enrollment in free/reduced lunch programs continues to rise could also lead us to that conclusion.

**Figure 2.9: Families with Children below the ALICE® Threshold<sup>23</sup>**

### How many families with children are struggling?

Children add significant expense to a family budget, so it is not surprising that many families with children live below the ALICE Threshold. Though more families are headed by married parents, those families with a single parent are more likely to have income below the ALICE Threshold.



Source: American Community Survey, 2016, and the ALICE Threshold, 2016.

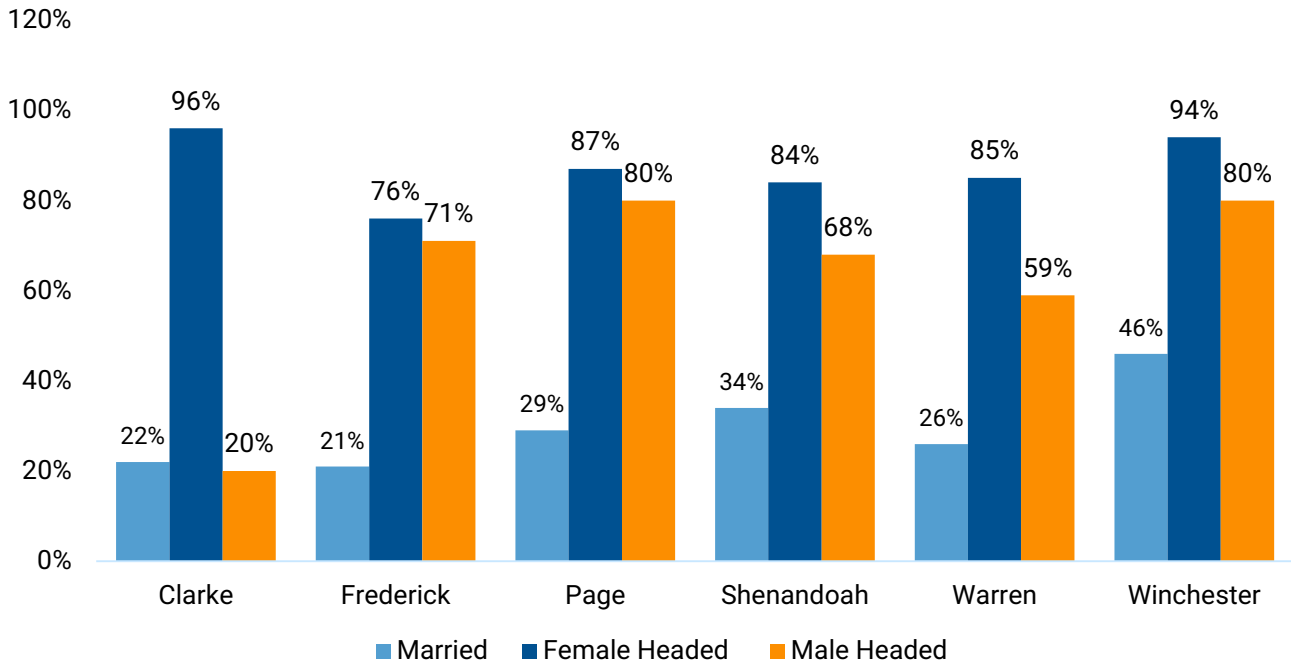
Note: All localities are represented in the image above. The “3 more” refers to Shenandoah, Warren and Winchester.

<sup>23</sup> ALICE® Report, 2017, updated on website, <https://www.unitedforalice.org/virginia>



**Figure 2.10: Families with Children below the ALICE® Threshold by County<sup>24</sup>**

In every jurisdiction, female headed households had the largest percentage of children in families who fall below the ALICE threshold. Winchester City and Clarke had over 90% of female-headed households fall below the ALICE threshold. Single-headed male households had the next largest percentage of children in families under the ALICE threshold.



<sup>24</sup> ALICE® Report, 2017, updated on website, <https://www.unitedforalice.org/virginia>, retrieved 12/11/19

## Childhood Well-Being

According to Voices for Virginia’s Children, children living below 200% of the poverty level are economically disadvantaged and live in families that struggle to meet basic needs such as, food, housing, utilities, childcare and transportation. Two out of every five children in the Northern Shenandoah Valley classify as economically disadvantaged.

Figure 2.11: Economic Disadvantage<sup>25</sup>

Demographics		Economic Well-Being		Education			Health		Safety
	Total Population Under 18	Number of Children Econ. Dis.** (Below 200% FPL*)	Percentage of Children Econ. Dis.**	Pass Rate of Kindergarteners on PALS-K Exam (Fall K Readiness Exam)	Pass Rate of 3 <sup>rd</sup> Graders on SOL Reading Test – Economically Disadvantaged	Pass Rate of 3 <sup>rd</sup> Graders on SOL Reading Test – <b>NOT</b> Economically Disadvantaged	Low Income Children w/o Health Insurance (Below 200% FPL*)	Percent Prenatal Care in 1 <sup>st</sup> Trimester	Rate of Children Entering Foster Care (per 1,000)
Clarke	3,094	981 (+124)	32% (+3%)	93%	64%	66%	107 (+8)	91%	1 (same)
Frederick	19,424	5,051 (-262)	26% (-2%)	85%	53%	78%	433 (-184)	78%	.7 (-.6)
Page	4,822	2,364 (-163)	49% (-3%)	84%	61%	80%	126 (-45)	88%	2.1 (+1.3)
Shenandoah	8,738	4,049 (-293)	46% (-3%)	76%	50%	68%	337 (-54)	98%	0.3 (-.1)
Warren	8,841	3,104 (429)	35% (+45)	76%	65%	76%	208 (-87)	76%	.8 (-.8)
Winchester	6,163	3,601 (-21)	58% (-3%)	75%	55%	89%	244 (-62)	69%	8 (+3.5)

\*FPL stands for Federal Poverty Level. The federal poverty definition consists of a series of thresholds based on family size and composition. In 2016, a 200% poverty threshold for a family of two adults and two children was \$48,600.

\*\*Econ. Dis. = Economically Disadvantaged

The numbers in parentheses represent the difference between the updated numbers and the previous needs assessment which sourced numbers from 2014 and 2015 versus 2016 and 2017.

<sup>25</sup> Kids Count Data Center; U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey & Small Area Estimates 2016, UVA Curry School of Education Academic Year 2017, Virginia Department of Education Academic Year 2016, Virginia Department of Health 2015, Virginia Department of Social Services State Fiscal Year 2017, Produced May 2018. <https://vakids.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/VVC-KidsCount-2018Infographics-WEB-Valley.pdf>

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## THE CONSEQUENCES OF INSUFFICIENT HOUSEHOLD INCOME

The United Way ALICE Project provides a framework, language and tools to measure and understand the struggles of the growing number of households in our communities that do not earn enough to afford basic necessities, a population called ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed).

This new Consequences of Insufficient Household Income report provides a deeper level of understanding of the choices that ALICE and poverty-level families across the country make when they do not have enough income or assistance to afford basic necessities, and the consequences of those choices.

This report does not publish these excerpts in their entirety, but the full report can be viewed at [http://ouw.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/17UWALICE%20Report\\_NCR\\_11.27.17\\_Lowres.pdf](http://ouw.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/17UWALICE%20Report_NCR_11.27.17_Lowres.pdf)

### Childcare

#### Strategy 1: Choose Less Expensive Childcare Options

The majority of young children in the U.S. are not in organized, quality childcare arrangements. In 2015, 11 million children under age 5 spent an average of more than 36 hours per week in childcare, but only 10% of these arrangements met the quality requirements that produce positive outcomes (Child Care Aware of America, 2015). The U.S. Census reports that nationally in 2011, only 24% of young children were in an organized care facility (including licensed and accredited early care centers and preschools). Forty-two percent were being taken care of by a relative, 11% were in another nonrelative care arrangement (care by a babysitter, friend or neighbor, or in a family daycare setting) and 25% had no regular childcare arrangement. Since the mid-1980s, the biggest changes in childcare arrangements for working parents have been the decline in nonrelative care (falling from 28% to 13% in 2011) and the increased use of day care centers (from 14% to 20% by 2011) and father care (from 15% to 20%)(Laughlin, 2013).

Consequences:

- Less academic preparation
- Delays in intellectual and social development: Quality care and a supportive educational environment are critical to the overall development of a child. A growing body of research has shown that high-quality early care and preschool is especially beneficial to children from low-income families, who tend to enter kindergarten 12 to 14 months behind their classmates in pre-literacy and language skills. Children who attend high-quality preschool are more likely to have kindergarten readiness skills and less likely to repeat grades and use special education services. They are more likely to graduate high school, succeed in college and thrive in their careers. Society also benefits when

children attend high-quality preschool: Each \$1 spent on early learning brings an estimated \$8.60 in returns to society, with half of that return generated by higher income (U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

- Staffing disparities: Staffing is crucial to quality childcare programs; less expensive care options tend to have less experienced and well-trained staff.
- Health and safety risks: Higher-quality settings are likely to have better health and safety practices.

### **Strategy 2: Pay More for Care Than the Family Budget Allows**

One option some ALICE families choose is to pay more of their budget for childcare than they can afford. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services sets the affordability guideline for household spending on childcare at 10% of household income. Yet in the ALICE Household Survival Budget for a family with two children, the cost of childcare equals approximately 25% of the family's budget. And beyond the cost of quality early education, there are additional expenses including care before and after childcare center hours and transportation to and from childcare (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2013).

Consequences:

- No money for other necessities: When more money is devoted to childcare, there is less available for other necessities. For example, some ALICE families make a trade-off by living in substandard housing, which can pose health risks to both children and adults, in turn raising health care costs for both families and communities.
- Lack of savings: ALICE families who overpay for childcare are often not able to save for their child's future – for higher education, or an unforeseen emergency.
- Increased Debt

### **Strategy 3: Access Child Care Assistance**

Many states and local communities have programs to make childcare more affordable, including subsidies and vouchers. Programs differ by state and community, and some local areas have additional nonprofit assistance. Eligibility varies based on income, family size, and type and cost of care.

Consequences:

- The benefit "cliff": Parents juggling their roles as caregivers and income-earners balance their resources from wages, government assistance and support from social networks such as family, friends and local service providers. Earning above a certain level can cause some ALICE families to lose childcare benefits (the "cliff" effect). In many cases, parents have to choose not to work extra hours at their job, not to take a

raise or not to accept a job offer in order to remain eligible for their childcare subsidy (The Indiana Institute for Working Families, 2012; East & Roll, 2010; Randolph, 2014).

**Strategy 4: Live in a District with Publicly Funded Preschool**

Public preschools provide great savings to ALICE and poverty-level families.

Consequences:

- Persistent gaps in care: State-funded preschool enables many children in low-income families to attend preschool who otherwise would not have access. However, most publicly funded preschool programs do not offer wraparound care (before and after school hours) or summer care. ALICE families who work from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. year-round need care from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. (and often longer) during the school year and over the summer.
- Inconsistent program availability: Finding publicly funded preschools is often difficult, as they still only serve a small percentage of the population.
- Risk of lower-quality early education: The quality of publicly funded preschool also varies between states.

**Strategy 5: Go Without Child Care**

Faced with challenges of cost and access, some ALICE families simply forgo childcare.

Consequences:

- Lack of school readiness: While many young children thrive with stay-at-home parents, some who don't attend early care or preschool may not gain cognitive and language development and the preacademic skills necessary for success in kindergarten and beyond. Children may also miss out on these skills if their communities lack early-childhood resources, ranging from libraries to enrichment classes to playgrounds. These educational gaps tend to be much more difficult and costly to close as children advance through elementary, middle and high school (Center for Public Education, 2007; National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2009; Obama White House, 2014).
- Loss of family income: One parent having to forgo work limits a family's current income, future earning potential and retirement savings.
- Loss of education advancement: Nearly 25% of college students in the U.S., or four million students, have dependent children themselves. Among low-income and first-generation college students, the percentage is even higher. These parents face challenges of increased expenses due to college tuition, increased demands on time for

work, study and parenting, and in many states, difficulty finding childcare on or near campus. Being a parent substantially increases the likelihood of leaving college with no degree, with 53% of parents compared to 31% of nonparents leaving college with no degree after six years (Institute for Women’s Policy Research, 2013; Rose & Hill, 2013).

### **Strategy 6: Modify Work Schedules**

In some ALICE families, one or both parents modify their work schedules to minimize childcare hours or conform to childcare providers’ standard hours.

Consequences:

- Reduced income: Working fewer hours reduces income, can decrease opportunities for advancement, and makes ALICE families more vulnerable to the range of consequences discussed throughout this report.
- Difficulty of scheduling for low-income workers with nonstandard schedules: Trying to secure work hours that mirror childcare hours is especially problematic for the many low-wage workers who have nonstandard schedules.
- Added family stress: Irregular work schedules and shift work, which keep parents from seeing their children regularly, have a negative impact on relationships and create less stable home environments (Hendrix & Parcel, 2013).
- Loss of work-related childcare benefits: Modifying a parent’s work schedule can limit an ALICE family’s access to benefits and use of public preschool options.

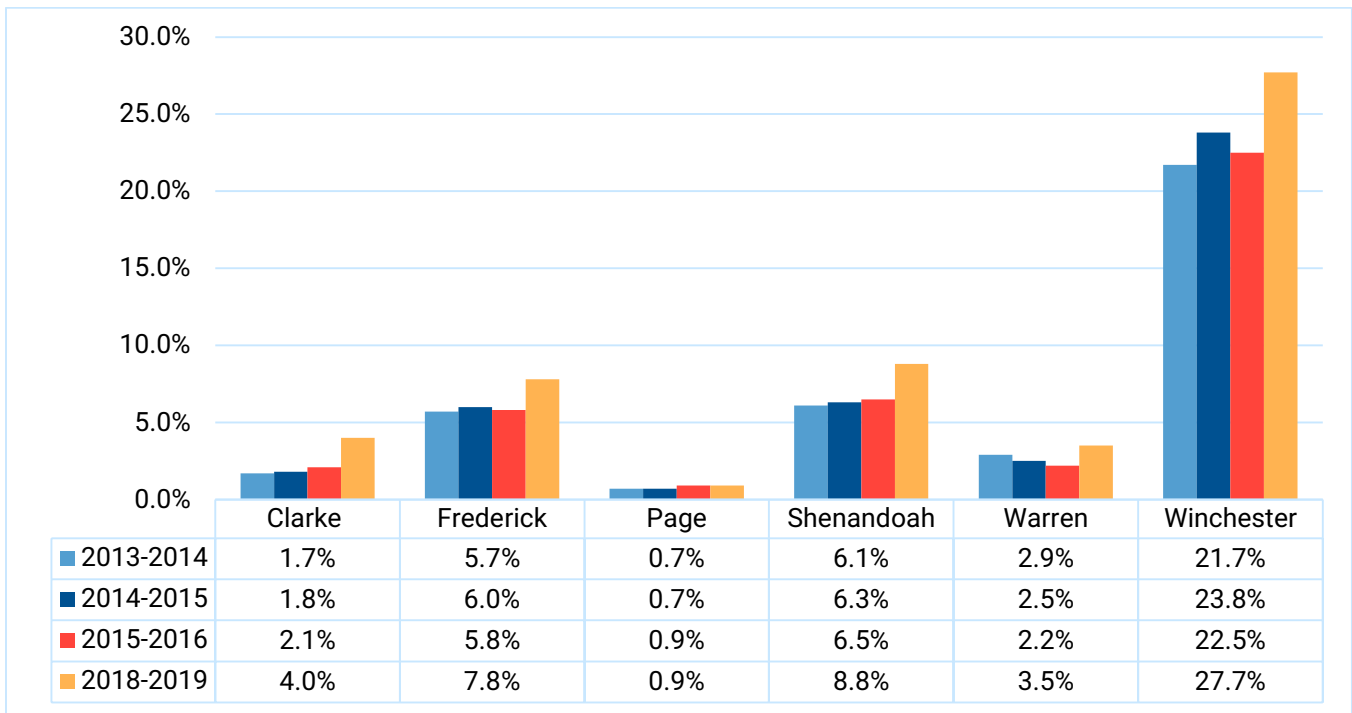
## LANGUAGE

### English Learners in K-12 Public Schools

Virginia’s new School Quality Profiles provide information about student achievement, college and career readiness, program completion, school safety, teacher quality and other topics of interest to parents and the general public. English language learners are defined as students whose first language is other than English, and who are in a special program for learning English.<sup>26</sup>

Consistent with demographic trends the number of English Learners in K-12 public schools increased in every jurisdiction, with the exception of Page County where it stayed the same, as we compared 2015-2016 data with 2018-2019 data.

**Figure 2.12: English Learners in K-12 Public Schools<sup>27</sup>**



<sup>26</sup> Virginia Department of Education, Virginia School Quality Profiles, Glossary, <http://schoolquality.virginia.gov/glossary#doe-terms-e>

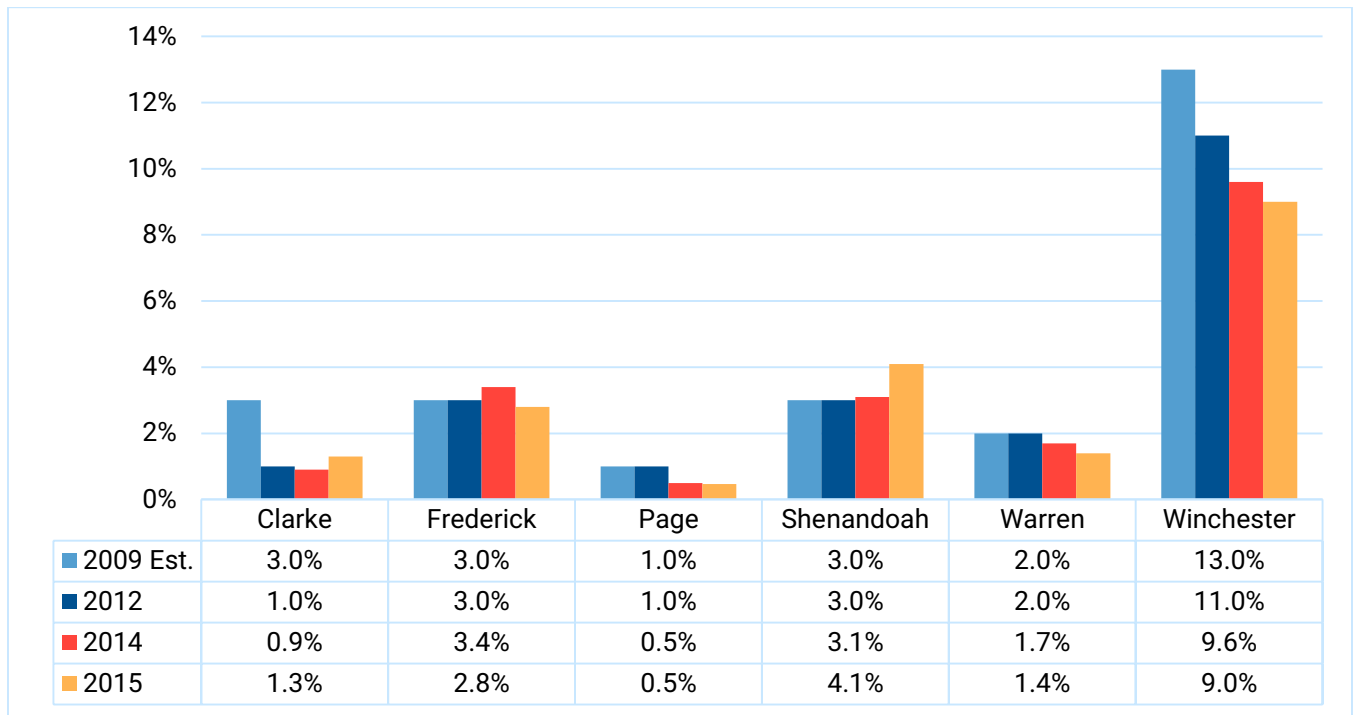
<sup>27</sup> Virginia Department of Education, Virginia School Quality Profiles, 2013-2014, 2014-2015 and 2015-2016, 2018-2019. <http://schoolquality.virginia.gov/>

## Language Proficiency

The American Community Survey (U.S. Census Bureau) data shows the percentage of people who speak English “less than very well” from the 2009, 2012, 2014 and 2015 five-year estimates. Frederick County, Page County, Warren County and the City of Winchester saw a decline in the number of people that said they were able to speak English “less than very well” from 2009 to 2015, meaning that more people in these communities have better English language speaking abilities than in previous years. Despite the marked improvement in English-speaking abilities, one out of every 10 people in the City of Winchester say they speak English “less than very well.” Compared to 2009, Shenandoah County was the only jurisdiction with a higher percentage of people reporting that they could speak English “less than very well.”

In comparison to school divisions from around the state of Virginia, the City of Winchester ranks as having the 7<sup>th</sup> highest percentage of Limited English Proficient students. Only Manassas City, Harrisonburg City, Manassas Park City, Alexandria City, Arlington County and Fairfax County were higher in limited English proficient students.

**Figure 2.13: Ability to Speak English ‘Less Than Very Well’ (5 years+)<sup>28</sup>**



Respondents who reported speaking a language other than English were asked to indicate their ability to speak English in one of the following categories: “Very Well,” “Well,” “Not Well” or “Not

<sup>28</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-09, 2008-12, 2010-2014 and 2011-2015 American Community Survey multi-year estimates



at all.” The data on ability to speak English represent the person’s own perception about his or her own ability.

Figure 2.13 remained the same from the previous needs assessment as ACS numbers were not updated with more current data.

**Figure 2.14: Virginia Counties Percent of Population – Not Proficient in English, 2018<sup>29</sup>**

Language	Clarke	Frederick	Page	Shenandoah	Warren	Winchester
<b>Total Households</b>	5,568	30,495	9,467	17,262	14,190	10,520
<b>English Only (number of Households)</b>	5,103	27,650	9,140	16,094	13,189	8,854
<b>English Only (percentage of households)</b>	92%	91%	97%	93%	93%	84%
<b>Spanish</b>	204	2,064	138	767	520	1,251
<b>Limited English-Speaking Household (Spanish)</b>	30	265	-	213	86	470
<b>Other Indo-European Languages</b>	169	406	116	324	280	217
<b>Limited English-Speaking Household (Indo-European)</b>	13	18	15	64	27	7
<b>Asian and Pacific Island Languages</b>	74	315	73	77	119	138
<b>Limited English-Speaking Household (Asian and Pacific Island)</b>	30	33	-	7	28	28
<b>Other Languages</b>	18	60	-	-	82	60
<b>Limited English-Speaking Household (Other Languages)</b>	-	-	-	-	-	16

<sup>29</sup> US Census Bureau, ACS 5 Year Estimates, 2017, extracted from Valley Health Community Health Needs Assessment.

The City of Winchester has approximately 37.6% of their Hispanic population that do not speak English. Clarke County shows a higher percentage (40.5%) of the Asian population that do not speak English.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Winchester Medical Center, Community Health Needs Assessment, 2019.

## LITERACY

### Scope of the Adult Literacy Crisis in the United States

A March 2019 ProLiteracy White paper summarizes the scope of the Adult Literacy Crisis in the United States.<sup>31</sup>

Among the social issues of most importance to Americans, these consistently rise to the top: poverty, crime, jobs, immigration, education, health care and the economy. One factor that can have a positive impact on all of these issues is increasing adult literacy rates. Fourteen percent of adults in the United States struggle with low reading, writing and basic math skills.<sup>32</sup> And, according to the 2013 Survey of Adult Skills by the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), the literacy skill level of U.S. adults ages 16 to 65 is well below the international average of adults in 23 other developed countries.<sup>33</sup>

The implications of low adult literacy rates are significant. Forty-three percent of adults living in poverty function at low literacy rates.<sup>34</sup> Seventy percent of inmates have low literacy rates. The incarceration rates for high school dropouts between the ages of 16 and 24 are 63 times higher than those for college graduates.<sup>35</sup> Immigrants to the United States must learn to navigate in a country where English is the official language, while often they cannot read or write well in their native language. This fact is especially significant considering that by 2030, nearly one in six U.S. workers will be an immigrant.<sup>36</sup>

The cycle does not end with adults. The children of low-literate parents are exposed to 30 million fewer words and enter kindergarten with a much larger skills gap than their peers.<sup>37</sup> Low-literate adults in the United States add as much as \$238 billion in costs to the health care system every year.<sup>38</sup> In addition, low literacy costs the U.S. at least \$225 billion each year in non-productivity in the workforce, crime and loss of tax revenue due to unemployment.<sup>39</sup>

Despite these compelling statistics and the fact that low adult literacy rates have a direct impact on our economic well-being, awareness of the adult literacy issue is low: Only 59% of Americans are even aware it is a problem.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Full paper can be found at [https://www.proliteracy.org/Portals/0/pdf/Research/White%20Papers/2019-03\\_United%20Way%20White%20Paper\\_F.pdf?ver=2019-05-03-144858-000](https://www.proliteracy.org/Portals/0/pdf/Research/White%20Papers/2019-03_United%20Way%20White%20Paper_F.pdf?ver=2019-05-03-144858-000)

<sup>32</sup> OECD, "Time for the U.S. to Reskill?: What the Survey of Adult Skills Says," OECD Skills Studies, OECD Publishing, 2013

<sup>33</sup> OECD, "OECD Skills Outlook 2013: First Results from the Survey of Adult Skills," OECD Publishing, 2013

<sup>34</sup> National Institute for Literacy, "The State of Literacy in America: Estimates at the Local, State, and National Levels," 1998

<sup>35</sup> Northeastern University - Center for Labor Market Studies, "The Consequences of Dropping Out of High School," Northeastern University, 01 October 2009

<sup>36</sup> Center for Immigration Studies, "Projecting Immigration's Impact on the Size and Age Structure of the 21st Century American Population," December 2012

<sup>37</sup> Betty Hart & Todd R. Risley, "Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children," Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., 30 June 1995

<sup>38</sup> Vernon JA, Trujillo A, Rosenbaum S, DeBuono B., "Low Health Literacy: Implications for National Health Policy," Washington, DC: George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services, 2007

<sup>39</sup> OECD, "OECD Skills Outlook 2013: First Results from the Survey of Adult Skills," OECD Publishing, 2013

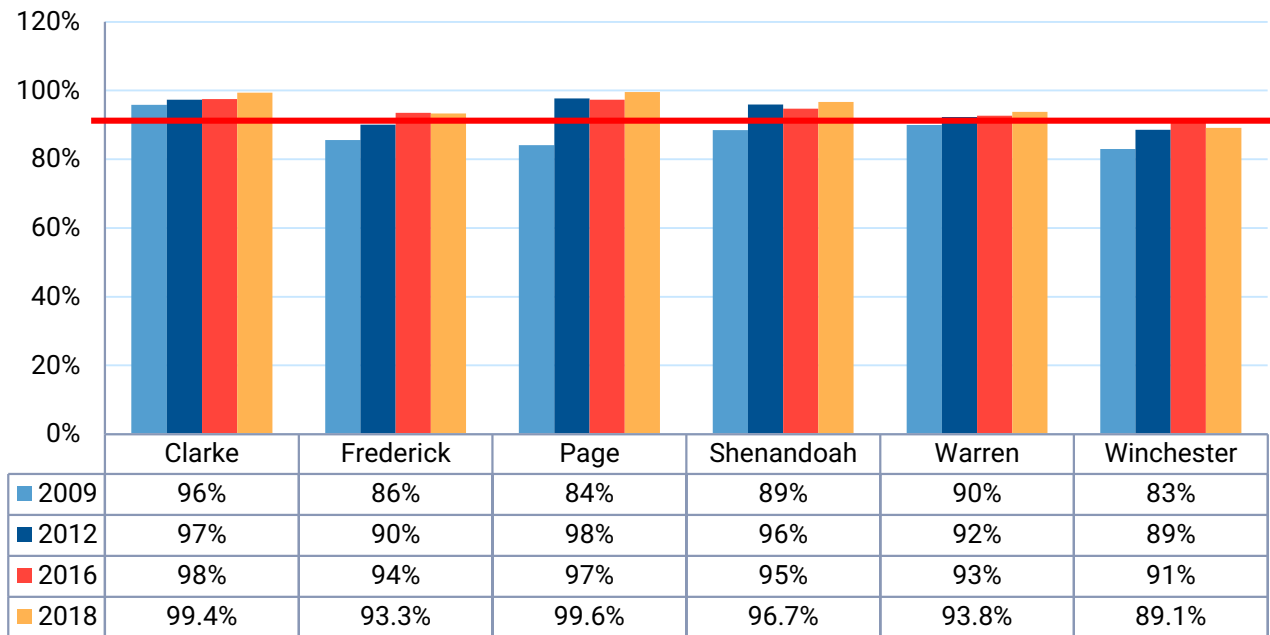
<sup>40</sup> ProLiteracy Omnibus Survey, 2016

## GRADUATION AND POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

### On-Time Graduation (all students)

The Virginia Department of Education calculates the Virginia On-Time Graduation Rate as the percentage of students in a cohort who earned a Board of Education-approved diploma within four years of entering high school for the first time. Clarke County, Page County, Shenandoah County, and Warren County saw an increase in on-time graduation rates when comparing 2016 to 2018. Frederick County and Winchester City were the only jurisdictions to see a slight decrease. All jurisdictions (with the exception of Winchester City) had higher on-time graduation rates than the Virginia average of 91.6%.

Figure 2.15: On-Time Graduation Rates<sup>41</sup>



The State of Virginia average which is indicated by the solid red line for 2018 is 91.6%

The Virginia On-Time Graduation Rate is a graduation rate based on individual student-level data, tracked over time that fully accounts for student mobility and retention patterns.<sup>42</sup> For more on how this is calculated visit:

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics\\_reports/graduation\\_completion/cohort\\_reports/va\\_ontime\\_gradrate.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics_reports/graduation_completion/cohort_reports/va_ontime_gradrate.pdf)

<sup>41</sup> Source: VA Dept. of Education – High School Graduation Cohort Reports for 2009, 2012, 2016 & 2018  
[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics\\_reports/graduation\\_completion/cohort\\_reports/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics_reports/graduation_completion/cohort_reports/index.shtml)

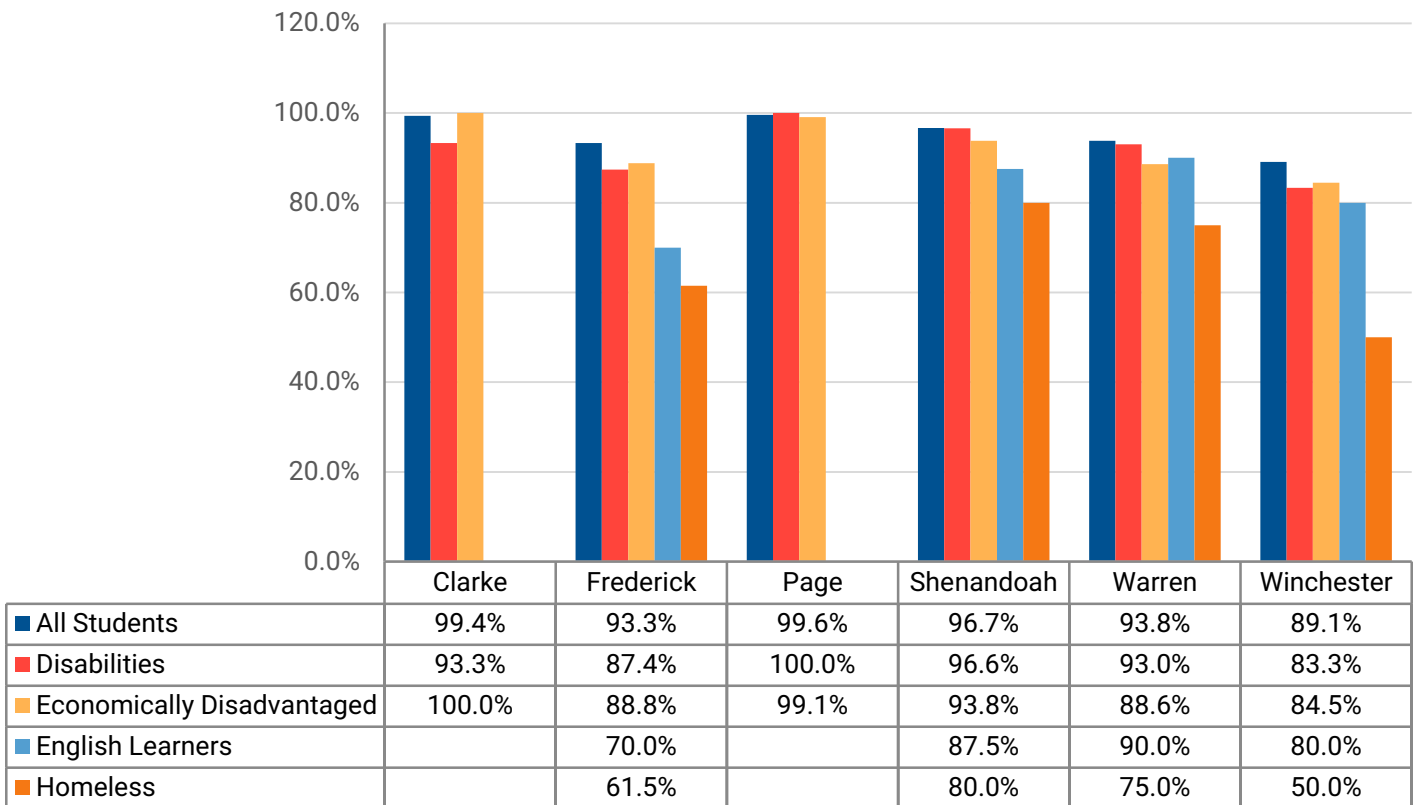
<sup>42</sup> Virginia Department of Education, Division of Policy and Communications,  
[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics\\_reports/graduation\\_completion/cohort\\_reports/va\\_ontime\\_gradrate.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/statistics_reports/graduation_completion/cohort_reports/va_ontime_gradrate.pdf)

## On-Time Graduation Rates (other sub-groups)

When evaluating student learning, on time graduation rates give us important information, but it assumes that all students have the same opportunity to achieve. Several jurisdictions publish data for subsets of their student population. When it came to students with disabilities, most jurisdictions saw similar on-time graduation rates when compared to all students. Economically disadvantaged students saw a much lower on-time graduation rate than students in all the jurisdictions. For the jurisdictions that provided data, English learners had even lower on-time graduation rates, with the lowest on-time graduation rates seen by students in the homeless population.

Figure 2.16 is the most current data (for 2018) and Figure 2.17 is included as a means of comparison with the last needs assessment which included data from 2016.

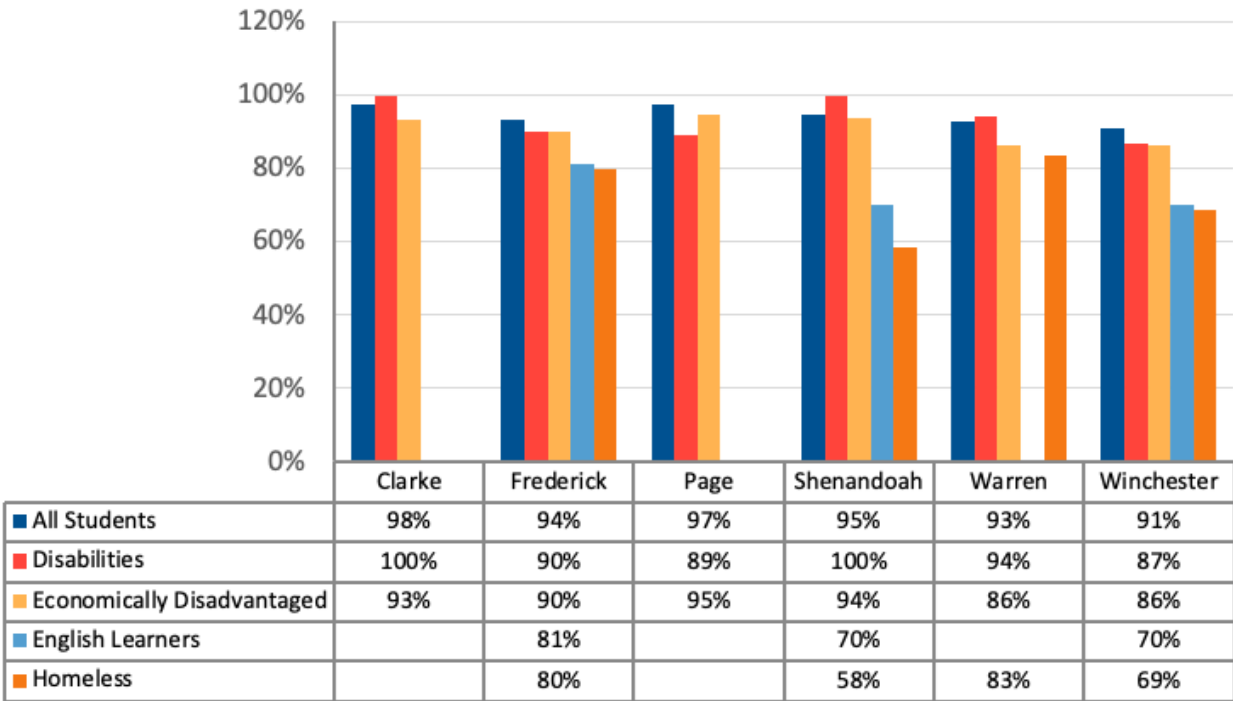
**Figure 2.16: On-Time Graduation Rates (other sub-groups) for 2018<sup>43</sup>**



\*Some data was not available

<sup>43</sup> Source: VA Dept. of Education – High School Graduation Cohort Reports for 2018

Figure 2.17: On-Time Graduation Rates (other sub-groups) for 2016



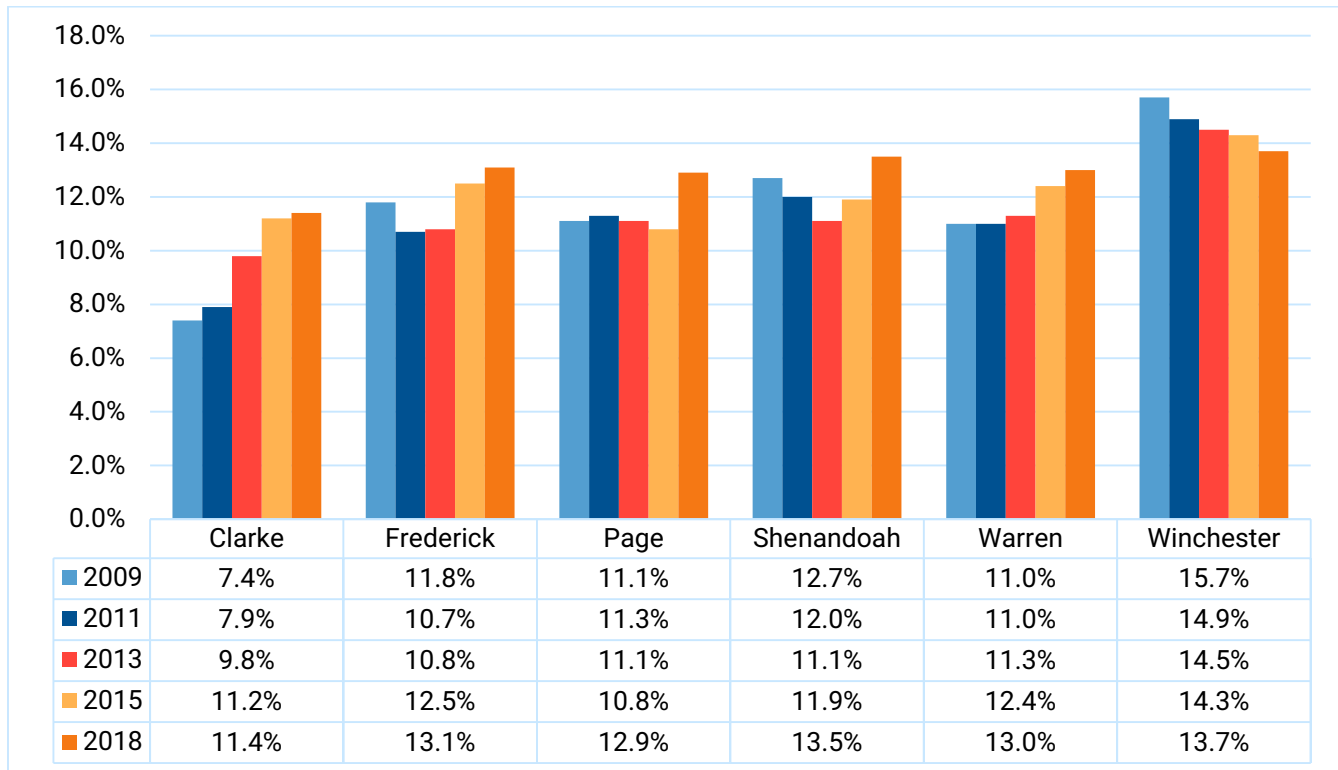
\*Some data was not available

This data leads us to believe, as well as validates what other studies have shown, that economically disadvantaged students, particularly those who are homeless, have a harder time being successful in school as their other peers. Additionally, language barriers prove to be a significant disadvantage. On-time graduation rates are not the only indication of the achievement gap. Data available at the Virginia Department of Education show gaps in achievement for the listed subgroups through reading and writing.

## Students Receiving Special Education Services

The Virginia Department of Education tracks the percentage of children who receive special education services, ages 0-22+. Clarke County, Frederick County, Page County, Shenandoah County and Warren County all saw an increase in the percentage of students with disabilities. The City of Winchester was the only jurisdiction to see a decrease.

**Figure 2.18: Students with Disabilities<sup>44</sup>**

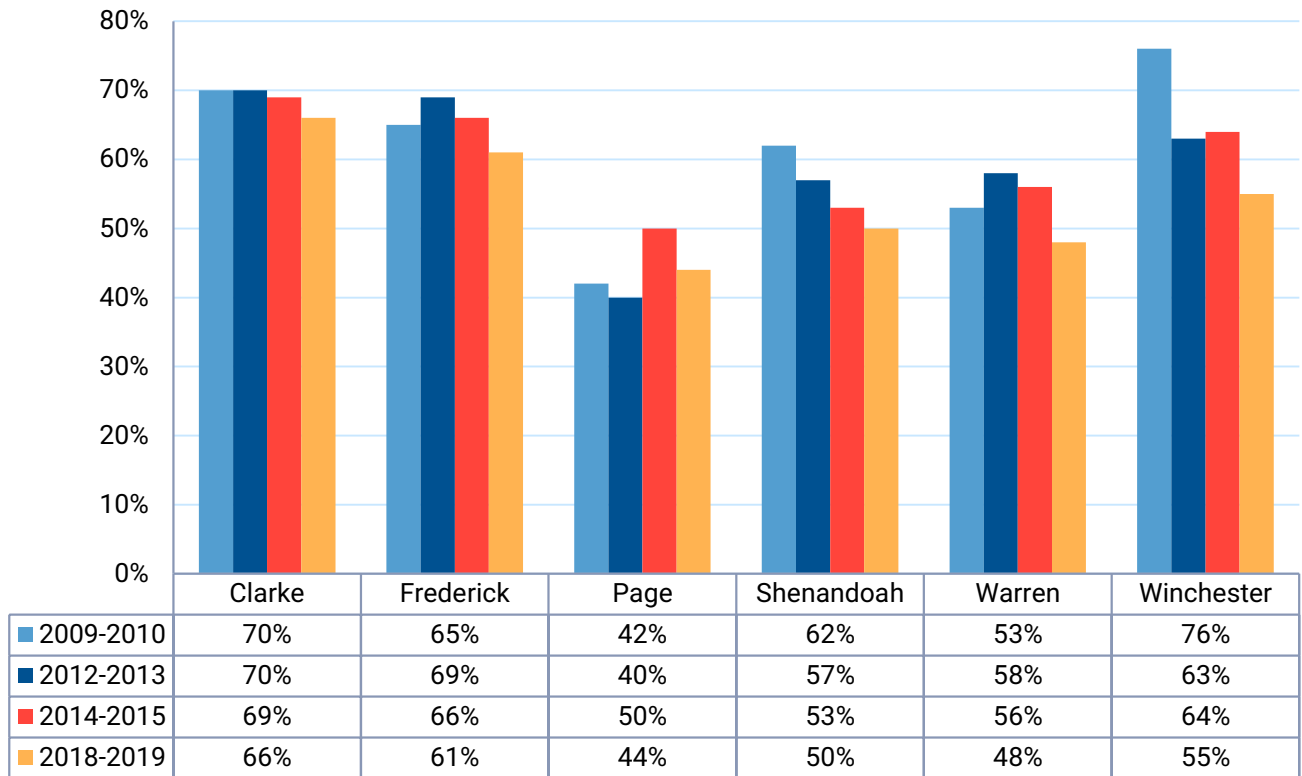


<sup>44</sup> Voices for Virginia’s Children, Kids Count Data, 2009, 2011, 2013 and Virginia Department of Education, Virginia School Quality Profiles, 2015-2018. <http://schoolquality.virginia.gov/>

## Postsecondary Participation

The Virginia Department of Education helped create the Virginia Longitudinal Data System to track student success from K-12 through college. Using the National Student Clearinghouse, cohort reports track students who enroll in any higher education institution within 16 months of earning a federally recognized high school diploma. All jurisdictions saw a decrease in postsecondary participation.

**Figure 2.19: Postsecondary Participation<sup>45</sup>**



For more information on how this data is collected and sourced, visit:

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/school\\_finance/arra/stabilization/reported\\_data/assurance\\_c/faq\\_c11.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/school_finance/arra/stabilization/reported_data/assurance_c/faq_c11.pdf)

<sup>45</sup> VA Dept. of Education - High School Graduates Postsecondary Enrollment Reports for cohort years 2009, 2012, 2014, & 2018  
[https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/postsec\\_public/postsec.do?dowhat=LOAD\\_REPORT\\_C11](https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/postsec_public/postsec.do?dowhat=LOAD_REPORT_C11)

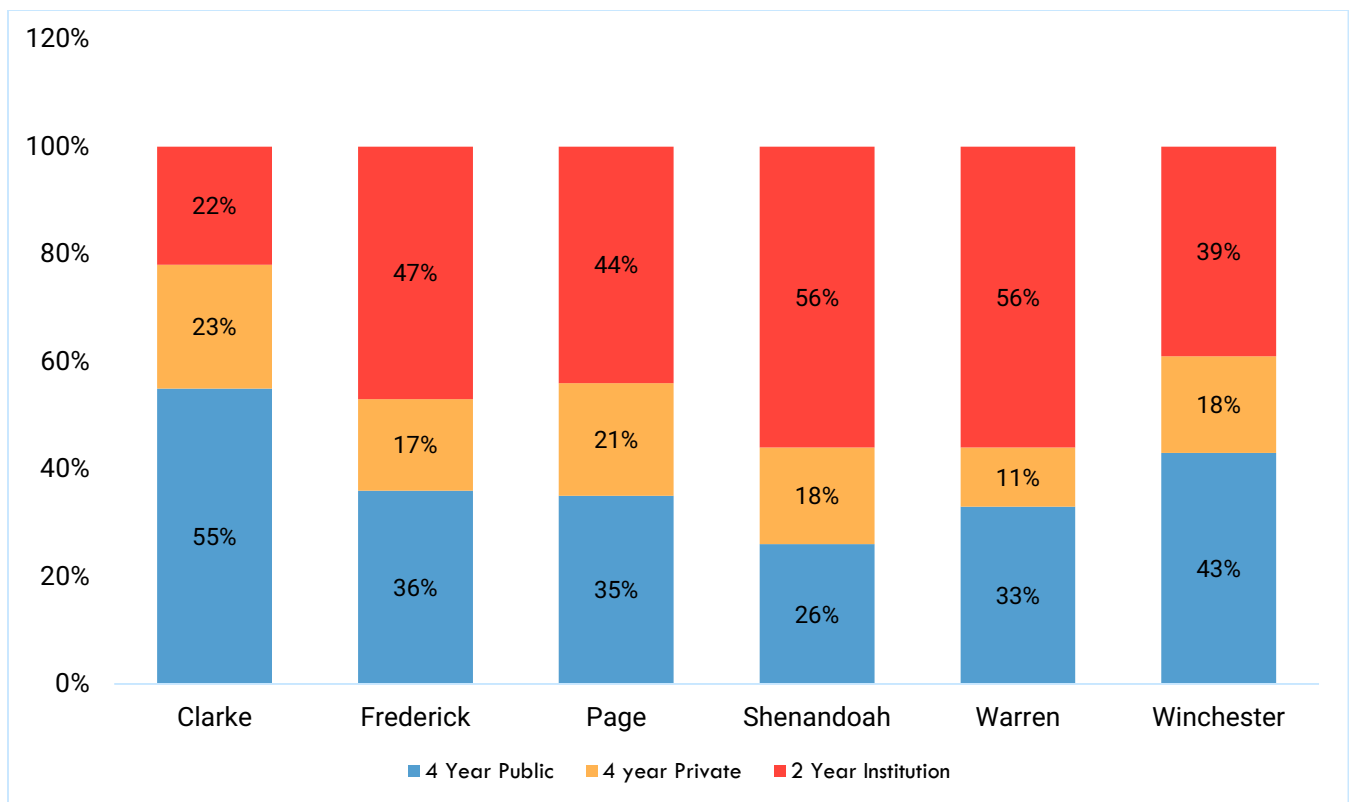


## Enrollment by Type of Postsecondary Institution

The majority of students in our area enroll in either a four-year public institution, or a two-year institution. In general, in all the jurisdictions, there are just as many students who in enroll in two-year institutions as four-year public institutions.

A limitation in the data is that this postsecondary participation does not reflect individuals who are pursuing postsecondary credentials. There are a variety of in-demand jobs in our area that require a postsecondary credential that can be obtained in less than one year, and certainly less than two. Examples of these postsecondary credentials include CDL licensure (4-week credential), Phlebotomist (12-week credential), Apprenticeship (varies by occupation), Welder (12-week credential) and Manufacturing Technician (6 week credential).

**Figure 2.20: 2018 Cohort Enrollment by Type of Postsecondary Institution<sup>46</sup>**



<sup>46</sup> VA Dept. of Education - High School Graduates Postsecondary Enrollment Reports for cohort year 2014

## Educational Attainment - High School Graduates

Page County has the highest percentage of high school students who do not receive a diploma. Frederick County and Clarke County have the smallest percentage of high school students who do not receive a diploma. Page, Shenandoah, Warren and Winchester City all had percentages higher than the US and Virginia averages.

In 2014, there were 16.0% in Shenandoah County without a high school diploma (non-graduates). The student population without a high school diploma has decreased significantly since 2014, which shows more students are receiving their high school diplomas by completing school.<sup>47</sup>

**Figure 2.21: Educational Attainment – High School Graduates<sup>48</sup>**

County/City	Population 25+, 9-12 Grade, without a high school diploma	Population 25+ with high school diploma	Population 25+ With some college	Population 25+ with College Degree
<b>Clarke</b>	11.6%	27.8%	18.6%	42%
<b>Frederick</b>	11%	30.1%	19.4%	39.6%
<b>Page</b>	19.6%	45.5%	16.6%	20.2%
<b>Shenandoah</b>	13.4%	38.8%	19.6%	28.3%
<b>Warren</b>	13.1%	36.8%	19.7%	30.4%
<b>Winchester</b>	15.2%	27%	16.3%	41.6%
<b>Virginia</b>	10.5%	23.6%	19.3%	46.6%
<b>US</b>	12.3%	27%	20.5%	40.3%

<sup>47</sup> Winchester Medical Center, Community Health Needs Assessment, 2019, Presentation Footnote.

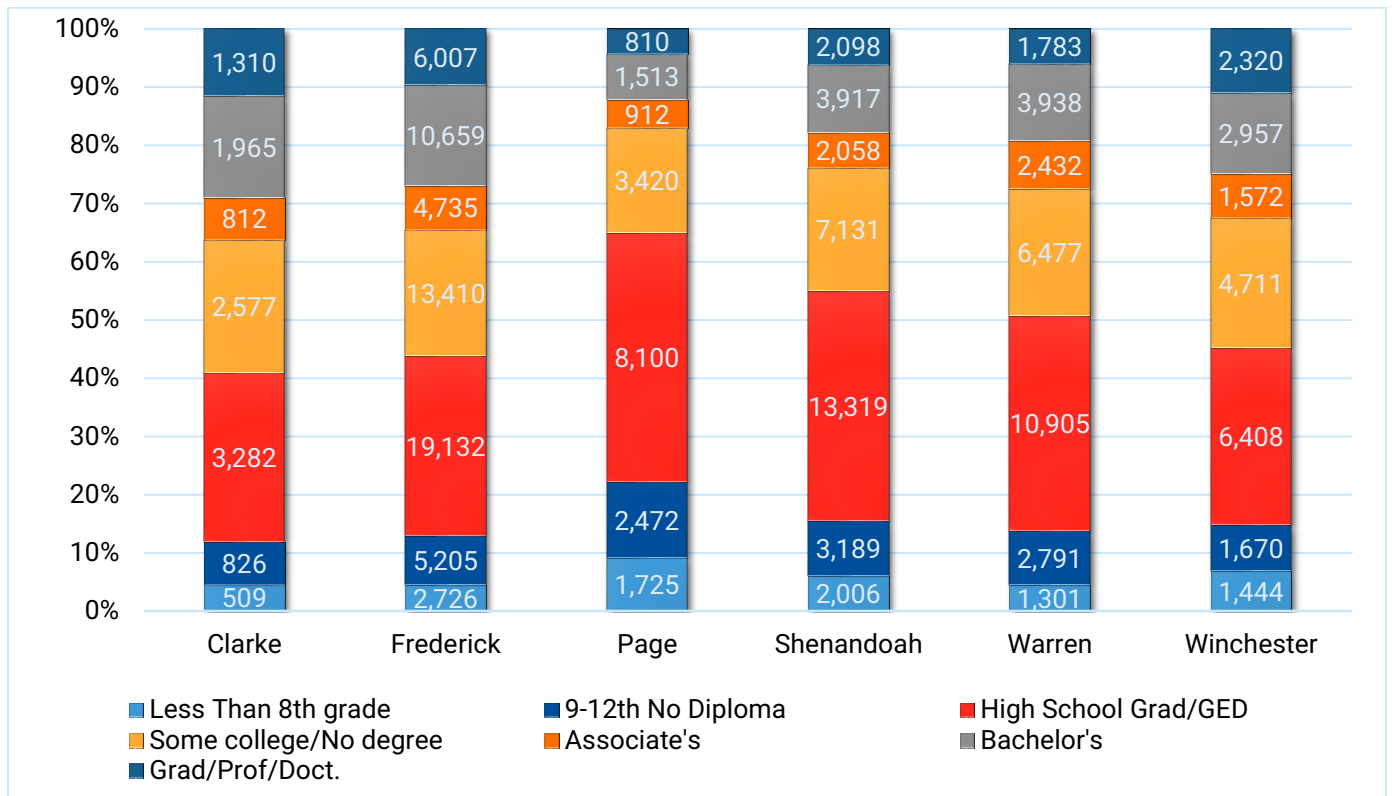
<sup>48</sup> Winchester Medical Center, Community Health Needs Assessment, 2019. Projections: ESRI Community Profiles for all PSA and SSA Counties.

## Educational Attainment – All Degrees

The Virginia Employment Commission provides a snapshot of the educational attainment in each jurisdiction. The disparities in educational attainment are more significant in rural areas where access to postsecondary opportunities may not be as predominant. It’s also fair to clarify that the “some college/no degree” section (in yellow below), which represents a large segment in each jurisdiction, would also be where a postsecondary credential would be classified. Many postsecondary credentials can be obtained in less than one year, and many in demand positions rely on these credentials. Transportation could play a factor as rural populations may have a harder time accessing community colleges, colleges and universities for advanced degrees. There is further discussion on transportation in the Financial Stability/Income section of this report.

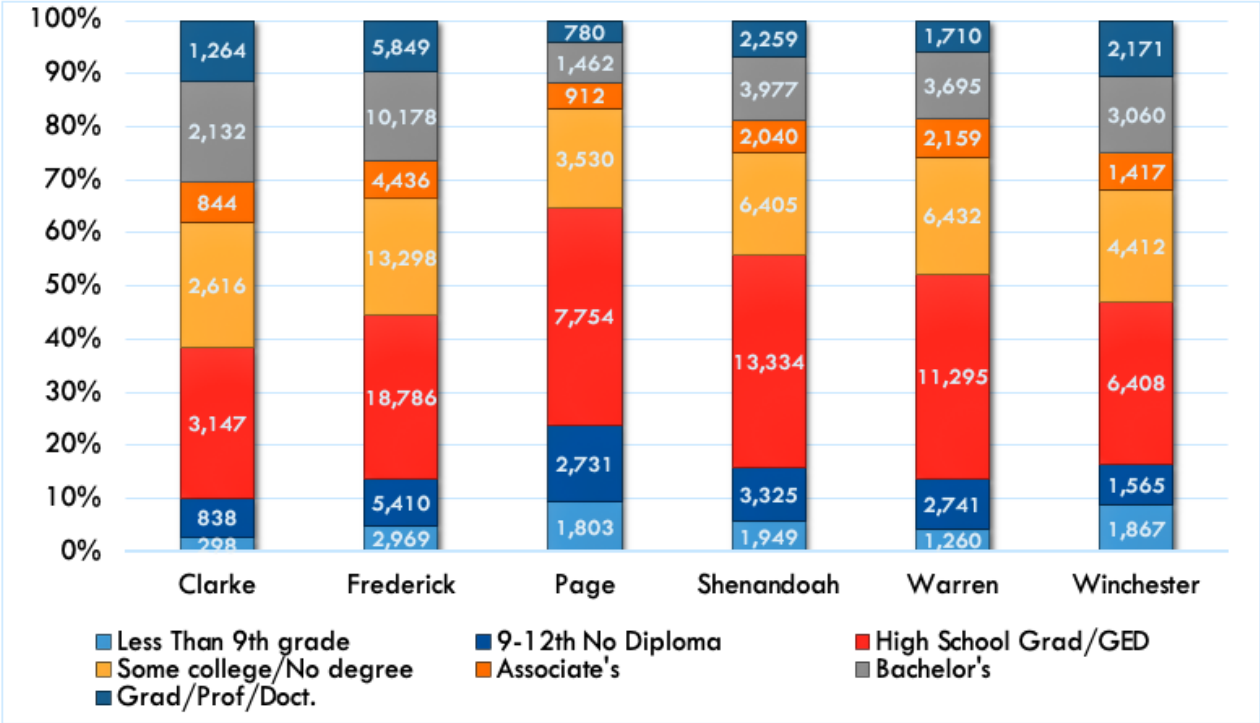
Figure 2.22 is the most current data available and Figure 2.23 is included as a means of comparison to the data available at the time of the last report (2016 data).

**Figure 2.22: Educational Attainment - 2019<sup>49</sup>**



<sup>49</sup> Virginia Employment Commission - Virginia Community Profile for the Northern Shenandoah Valley RC, 9/13/19 update, Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2011-2015.

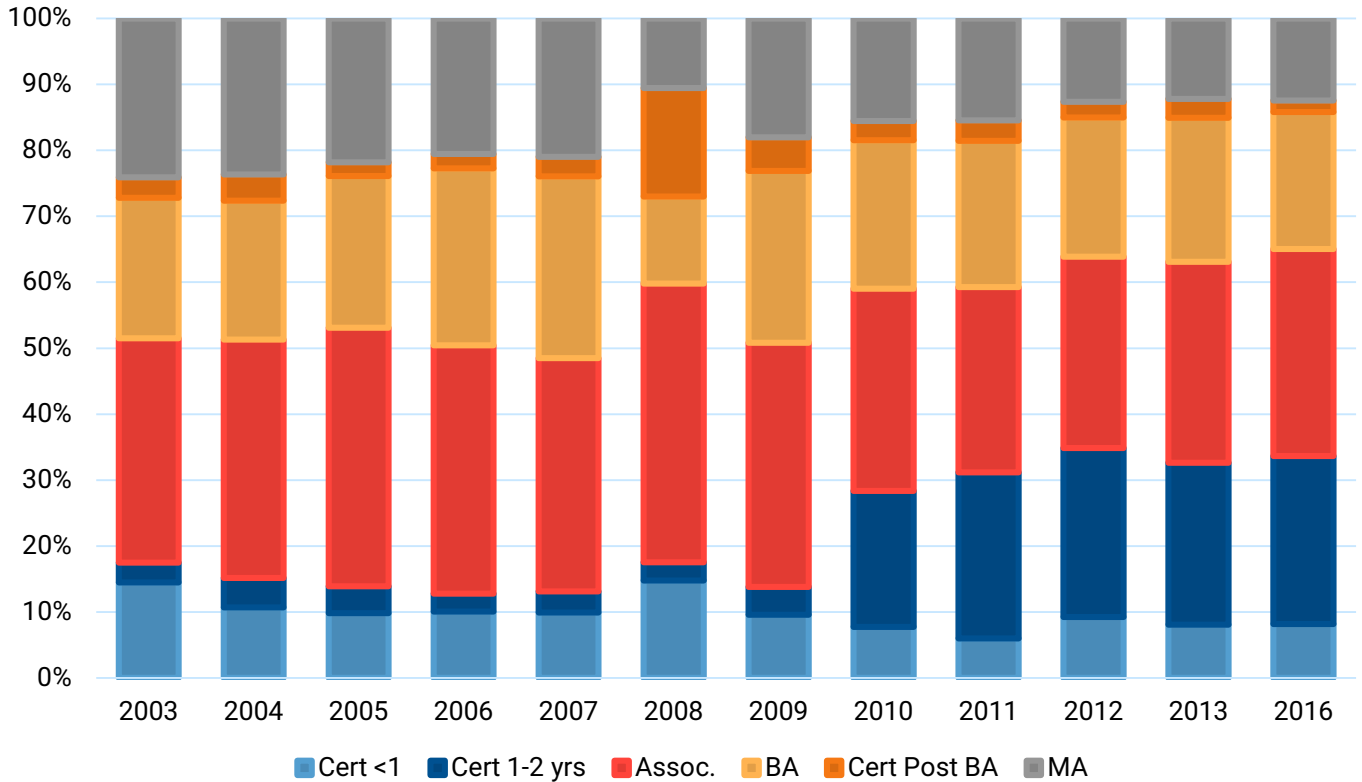
Figure 2.23: Educational Attainment – 2016



## Graduate Data Trends

The graduate trends from the U.S Department of Education show the trends from 2003 to 2013. This table only reflects degrees completed from institutions within the Northern Shenandoah Valley. The most significant trend is the notable increase in certifications from 2010 to 2016. The economic benefits of completing a certificate program or associate’s degree have become an attractive option in a competitive workforce due to low unemployment rates.

**Figure 2.24: Graduate Data Trends 2003-2016<sup>50</sup>**



<sup>50</sup> Virginia Employment Commission - Virginia Community Profile for the Northern Shenandoah Valley RC, 9/13/19 update