Expanded Ranch/Rambler in the Heart of Falls Church City. Updated 3 BR/2.5BA Brick Home with 2,800 sq ft of living space on Large Lot in a quiet neighborhood. A short distance to W&OD Trail, East Falls Church Metro Station, Farmer’s Market, and all that Downtown Falls Church City has to offer. Offered at $1,195,000.

3 Level Modern Farmhouse w/ over 4,200 sq ft of living space. 5BR/5BA w/ Eat-In Gourmet Kitchen & Butler’s Pantry, Family Room w/ Gas Fireplace, Formal Dining Room, and Main level Office/Study. Fantastic Location inside of the Beltway less than a mile from McLean Metro Station. Offered at $1,595,000.

Rarely Available 0.75 Acre property that backs to W&OD Trail. Expanded 1950’s Ranch/Rambler in Idyllic setting on Huge Lot TO “W/ OVER 100 MATURE AZALEA BUSHES & BEAUTIFUL PERENNIALS in a fantastic private location in the Heart of Falls Church City. Ready for Renovation, New Build, or subdivison. Offered at $1,350,000.

Beautiful 4BR/4BA Brick Craftsman w/ tons of natural sunlight, built in 2015 in Sought after Greenway Downs. An Entertainer’s Dream Home w/ Gourmet eat-in kitchen combined w/ Living & Dining areas & main level Primary Bedroom Suite. Backyard Deck and Stone Patio overlooks huge level fenced backyard. Great location close to Downtown Falls Church City shops & restaurants, and less than 3 Miles to Mosaic district, w/ a short commute to Washington DC. Offered at $1,145,000.

Market Is July Hot!

If you are looking to Buy, Sell, or Rent in 2023 please call Chris or Matt for a No Obligation consultation.

Chris Earman
Member NVAR Residential Top Producer Club
Weichert, Realtors – Chairman of the Board Club
(703) 628-4541 | Chris@EarmanRealEstate.com

Matt Earman
Member NVAR Residential Top Producer Club
Weichert, Realtors – Ambassadors Club
(703) 328-4563 | Matt@EarmanRealEstate.com

Vote for us
Best of FC.com 2023
We appreciate your support!
As the saying goes, first impressions matter. Curb appeal, a first impression of a property, plays a significant role in increasing the value of a property and attracting potential buyers or tenants. There are many actions one can take to improve curb appeal, and in doing so, make a positive first impression.

Charles Prince, the Falls Church City Arborist, suggested incorporating “native landscapes,” which includes local plants and other species, as a method to improve curb appeal. Allowing for native species can support biodiversity and create a more balanced environment.

“It reflects your personal style and creates a unique and inviting atmosphere,” Prince said.

Sandra Tarpinian is an Extension Master Gardener for Fairfax County and volunteer liaison with the National Wildlife Foundation, as well as a Falls Church resident. Tarpinian recommended five principles – “things you should think about as you’re landscaping,” she said – which can improve a property’s curb appeal. Tarpinian defined her five principles as flow (“what are you doing that is bringing the eye to the house?”), balance (“when you’re looking at it, there’s a sense of some kind of equilibrium there”), scale (“How big is the tree going to get in front of the house? How big is the shrub going to get?”), perspective (“you can play tricks with the eye by how you plant”) and practicality (“if you put stuff in that you’re not ready to maintain, pretty soon it’s not going to look good”).

Tarpinian suggested she would like to see residents shift their lawns into something that would better support wildlife. She referenced a history of people shifting towards having lawns and away from cultivating farmland, to the detriment of their local ecosystem.

“We have, since the 1800s, been married to lawn because it meant that we were rich enough that we didn’t have to farm the land,” Tarpinian said.

Prince noted improving curb appeal is an effective way to raise housing value, for both practical and emotional reasons. Practically, trees and other forms of well-placed landscaping provide shade during warmer times of the year, reducing the need for air conditioning and lowering energy costs. Additionally, he elaborated on how good landscaping can make people more emotionally attached to a property.

“A visually appealing exterior with attractive landscaping and well-maintained surroundings can evoke positive emotions in people,” Prince said. “It can create a sense of pride, comfort, and a welcoming environment, making potential buyers more likely to imagine themselves living in the house and calling it their home.”

Tarpinian recognizes that landscaping can be expensive, which is why she recommends people do it in segments. Despite the costs, she believes effective landscaping projects will be beneficial in the long run.

“I don’t think there’s any question that the right landscaping certainly will improve curb appeal,” Tarpinian said.

To Prince, strong curb appeal involves “well-designed landscaping” with many trees, flowers, shrubs and other plants. He said native plants set a property with strong curb appeal apart from a property with weak curb appeal.

“Incorporating native plants into the landscape design not only enhances the visual appeal but also promotes the environment and provides several benefits,” Prince said. “Native plants are adapted to the local climate, requiring less water, fertilizers, and pesticides. They also provide food and habitat for local wildlife, contribute to biodiversity, and help support the overall ecosystem.”

In Falls Church, Tarpinian said she likes how many people are removing lawns away from the curb, which makes the home more visible. To her, taking landscaping actions can complement the property.

“It changes your whole perspective that it, to me, makes the house more evident,” Tarpinian said. “Because nothing is hiding the house as much, then. The perspective is that this landscaping is closer to your eye and I think it also can make the house look bigger.”
FALLS CHURCH MARKET SUMMARY

- 18% less inventory over 2022 - still a great seller's market
- 58% of homes sold over list in 2022 - escalations are higher this year
- With prices escalating, it's an amazing time to sell!
- Remarkably low days on market

Just Sold: April-June 2023

- 309 N Virginia Ave: $2,000,000
- 606 Greenwich St: $1,677,000
- 112 Lounsbury Pl: $1,205,000
- 110 Jackson Ct: $1,109,000
- 250 N Maple Ave #209: $361,000
- 124 W George Mason Rd: $70,000
- 7508 Salem Rd: $1,220,000
- 2948 Rosemary Ln: $651,500

Call us for our VIP service to sell your home

703-867-8674

Keller Williams Realty
2111 Wilson Blvd, Arlington, VA 22201
©2005-2023 Tori McKinney, LLC

Tori McKinney 703-867-8674
Tori@ROCKSTARRealtyGroup.com
ROCKSTARRealtyGroup.com
In the past year, the median sale price of a single family home in Falls Church surpassed a record-setting $1 million. The milestone reflects the past two decades of rising home prices in the region and the ultra-competitive nature of its real estate market. For buyers looking to live in or near Falls Church but can’t afford a million dollar price tag, options are limited. At the time of publication, there are no single family homes in the city of Falls Church proper listed under $1 million. Right outside the city, in the 22046 ZIP code, there are two, single-family homes still in the six-digit price range.

7327 Allan Ave, listed for $859,900, is a five bedroom, three bathroom rambler located in Fairfax County off of Shreve Rd. The home is listed by Paul Thistle at Take 2 Real Estate.

“The house offers a really good value for a single family home in Falls Church,” Thistle said. The home has a fenced-in yard, a kitchen with a small island and a recreation room in the basement.

6709 Hallwood Ave is a Cape Cod located near the intersection of I-66 and Great Falls Street in Fairfax County. The four bedroom, three bathroom house is listed for $849,000 by John Brand at Compass Real Estate.

The house is on the market for the first time in 50 years with many of its original details still intact. The 0.42 acre lot has a large, fenced-in backyard, mature trees and a screened in porch. Those looking to purchase townhomes or condos within the city will have some options in the under-$1 million category. 141 W Ammandale Road is a three bedroom, four bathroom townhouse in the Cherry Hill neighborhood that was just listed for $765,000 by Amanda Steinmuller at RLAH Real Estate. It has a small stone patio, breakfast bar and close proximity to downtown Falls Church. There are also three luxury condos for sale in the city, all priced at $800,000 or above.

“Every home wants the [single-family home], white picket fence with a quarter of an acre,” Woodley said. “But density is more sustainable and affordable.”

“Everyone wants the [single-family home], white picket fence with a quarter of an acre,” Woodley said. “But density is more sustainable and affordable.”

“There is a premium to live in Falls Church City,” Brenden Woodley, a Housing Development Specialist in the city’s housing department, said. “The market is incredibly seller driven. The city will own 18 homes under the Affordable Homeownership Program. Funding from the program is from a grant the city received from Amazon REACH. The city received $3.75 million from Amazon as part of the company’s effort to offset rising housing costs in the wake of its HQ2 in Arlington.

Homes up to $700,000 will be purchased by the city then sold with a subsidy of up to $170,000 for income-qualified first-time homebuyers. Program participants will also be eligible for other state-run affordable housing benefits, including SPARC low-interest mortgages, for which the city just received funding for.

“Everyone wants the [single-family home], white picket fence with a quarter of an acre,” Woodley said. “But density is more sustainable and affordable.”

“In January 2023, the city launched the Affordable Homeownership Program. Funding from the program is from a grant the city received from Amazon REACH. The city received $3.75 million from Amazon as part of the company’s effort to offset rising housing costs in the wake of its HQ2 in Arlington.

Homes up to $700,000 will be purchased by the city then sold with a subsidy of up to $170,000 for income-qualified first-time homebuyers. Program participants will also be eligible for other state-run affordable housing benefits, including SPARC low-interest mortgages, for which the city just received funding for.

“Everyone wants the [single-family home], white picket fence with a quarter of an acre,” Woodley said. “But density is more sustainable and affordable.”

“Everyone wants the [single-family home], white picket fence with a quarter of an acre,” Woodley said. “But density is more sustainable and affordable.”

3732 ALLAN AVE. IN Fairfax County is listed for $859,900.

(Photo: Sam Moustow)

6709 HALLWOOD AVE. IN Fairfax County is listed for $849,900.

(Photos: Sam Moustow)
Need compassionate, intelligent people to work with?

That's our team.

Smart, with a passion for real estate and a focus on what's best for our clients.

If you're buying or selling your home, give us a call. We're here to help!

PEAKE
REAL ESTATE GROUP LLC.

PEAKE
MANAGEMENT INC.

450 N Washington St. Ste M
Falls Church, VA 22046
www.peakeinc.com
LindseyPeake@Peakeinc.com
703-448-0212 x 0
703-408-2153 (Mobile)
Meet Your Home Experts

Zimmermann Homes
My family and I live in Falls Church, where we take pride in building leading-edge custom homes that increase energy efficiency, require minimal service, and are very durable. All Zimmermann Homes come standard with upgraded products and building techniques designed to add value and make the home more comfortable to live in. We are passionate about working together with our clients to build these innovative homes that combine a level of performance and beauty that is tough to find elsewhere.

Kathy Pippin, Samson Properties
Kathy Pippin grew up in Northern Virginia and received an engineering degree in Maryland. Her methodical approach and local knowledge, coupled with her negotiation skills and top-notch marketing, have well equipped her to serve her clients, whether first-time home buyers, repeat buyers, sellers, or investors. She is pragmatic and has a consultative approach when helping clients buy or sell. She has a dedicated team to produce successful outcomes. Kathy believes in giving back to the community and supporting local and national charities in the areas of children's cancer research, survivors of abuse, and worldwide medical assistance. She also believes in educating her clients, offering free seminars for home buyers and home sellers. In this changing market, it's more important than ever to understand the Dos and Don'ts of buying and selling! Register for Kathy's FREE, ONLINE educational seminars at: https://www.eventbrite.com/ec/free-online-home-buying-and-home-selling-seminars-2170299

703.386.7896 • KathyPippinProperties.com

Perch Houses
At Perch Houses we believe that living in an affordable home and experiencing shared community will lead to improved quality of life and healthier living. Until today, living in a beautiful house for less than a 1-bedroom apartment in Falls Church, VA was impossible. Now, Perch Houses has made that a reality by creating a unique co-living service for 55+ women in spacious suburban homes.

Perch is a new type of co-living property management platform focused on 55+ women seeking affordable living, community and easier access to wellness services. We lease properties and, in turn, re-lease each bedroom to individual women. There are never more than 3-4 people in a house. You can get matched with our personality quiz or organize a Perch house with your friends. Check it out at www.perchhouses.com

703.408.2153 • peakinc.com

Meet Your Home Experts

Moore Architects
For over 30 years, Moore Architects, PC has been able to provide innovative designs, suited perfectly for our clients’ needs. We are a full-service architectural firm, working in all stages of the process from schematic design through construction drawings and construction administration. The Moore Architects team can provide a hands-on approach to the entire development of architecture and design, including interiors. We are predominately a residential practice, concentrating on custom homes, full home renovations/additions, and historic preservation projects. As an award-winning firm, we are committed to designing high quality residential homes throughout the VA/MID/DC Metro Area and beyond.

703.532.1192 • moorearch.com

Tori McKinney - ROCK STAR Realty Group, KW Metro Center
My ROCK STAR Realty Group and I are here to help guide you with your home sale and get you into your new home. We have helped over 40 sellers & buyers in 2023 already … despite extremely low inventory.
How can we help you with your next move? Give ROCK STAR Realty Group a ring at (703) 867-8674, and we’ll get started on your real estate journey. We are here for you every step of the way.

703.867.8674 • RockStarRealtyGroup.com

The Mather
The Mather, opening in 2024, is a forward-thinking Life Plan Community for those 62+. It’s smack dab in the middle of it all in Tysons, VA, bordering a three-acre urban park and within walking distance of rail service, retail, and restaurants. The Mather’s apartment homes feature expansive views, luxury finishes, and smart-home technology. The community will feature 38,000+ square feet of amenities, including restaurants, spa, fitness center, indoor pool, rooftop clubroom, art studio, and more! Life Plan Communities are lifestyle communities in which people can pursue new passions and priorities, with a plan in place that supports aging well.

703.348.8522 • thematherysons.com

JD Callander and Ed Blanchard
JD Callander and Ed Blanchard with Weichert Realtors both call Falls Church City home and bring over 25 years of combined real estate experience and passion to their work. They are well-known and respected agents and demonstrate success through integrity in all that they do. They understand the market, are attentive to details and truly care about their client’s needs. They also love giving back to their beloved community through sponsoring the FCC Memorial Day Fun Run, HTG Games benefitting Falls Church City ES/PTA plus many smaller events. This year they’re adding a new annual trash event and hope to see you there!

703.821.1025 • NewNovaHome.com
Meet Your Home Experts

FOXCR AF Design Group

FOXCR AF Design Group is in their 34th year as an award-winning design/build firm and general contractor. FOXCR AF is among the most creative, experienced design/build firms in the region, specializing in meeting clients’ budget expectations and overcoming ever changing national and county codes, regulations and guidelines. Chandler Fox, the owner at FOXCR AF, is also a licensed real estate agent, so his expertise in both building and real estate provides the best of both worlds for the client. Fox analyzes the property for current and future marketability and helps his clients make an intelligent decision about whether or not a renovation is the best investment for their property’s future value. “We build relationships with every client, based on their individual needs and wants, and advise them honestly, as to the best path for their family’s future”.

703.536.1888 • FOXCR AF.com

Bethany Ellis, Long and Foster

Bethany Ellis owns and operates a highly successful real estate business in Northern Virginia and Washington, D.C. She is an experienced Realtor® whose goal is to exceed your expectations. Her knowledge of the local market, attention to every detail, excellent negotiating ability, and effective communication ensures that your real estate transaction will go smoothly from start to finish. Bethany has direct access to lenders, home inspectors, new home developers, settlement groups, and local service providers (painters, plumbers, carpet suppliers, handymen, electricians, plumbers, and more). If you’re looking to find a new home, build your dream home, get market statistics for your home or neighborhood, sell your existing home, make improvements to your current home, buy or sell an investment property or need answers to any real estate questions, make Bethany Ellis your real estate resource.

703.307.7003 • buyandsellwithBethany.com

Chris & Matt Earman – Weichert, Realtors

As a lifelong resident of Falls Church City, I’ve experienced first hand the growth and changes to the local and regional Real Estate Market. My past experiences in mortgage & finance, running local small businesses, volunteering, being involved in the local school systems, and building relationships over the past decades, gives me a unique perspective and advantage in representing my clients in the local Northern Virginia Real Estate Market. I am fully committed to providing you with a higher level of service that will make your real estate experience as easy and stress-free as possible. The recent addition of my son Matthew Earman to our team of experienced agents, has given us more flexibility and availability for our clients. Please call us for a “No Obligation” consultation, for all of your Real Estate needs.

Chris (Cell) 703.628.4541 Chris@EarmanRealEstate.com
Matt (Cell) 703.328.4563 Matt@EarmanRealEstate.com

Julie Andre, Senior Mortgage Loan Officer

Julie Andre is an area native and highly experienced Senior Mortgage Officer with UNFCU, lending in all 50 States. She provides valuable solutions and education for all home loan types and sizes. Julie provides individualized attention to borrowers from pre-approval through closing. First-time buyers, move-up buyers, down-sizers, self-employed, investors, second homes, cash buyers seeking delayed financing, foreign nationals and more. In addition to weekdays, Julie is available evenings and weekends.

703.237.0333 • JAndre@unfcu.com

WHO’S THE BEST?

The News-Press BEST OF FALLS CHURCH reader vote is back and it’s time to cast your ballot for your Falls Church-area favorites! Our 14th annual contest features a host of categories — now 36 in all — for readers to vote on the best eating, drinking, shopping and more in and around the Little City.

Winners will be featured in a special BEST OF FALLS CHURCH edition of the News-Press on August 17!

Vote for Your Falls Church Favorites:

**Food & Drink**
- American
- Outside Dining
- International • Brunch
- Bar/Brewery
- Treats and Sweets
- Favorite Little City Experience
- New Restaurant
- Lunch Spot

**Retail & Services**
- Mortgage/Bank • Professional Services
- Real Estate Agent • Real Estate Group • Property Management
- Doctor • Dentist • Orthodontist • Ophthalmologist
- Therapist • Physical Therapist/Chiropractor
- Auto • Dry Cleaners • Retirement Community
- Hair Salon/Barbershop • Gym/Health/Yoga • Nail/Day/Skin Spa • Live Entertainment • Pet Services • Specialty Store • School • Camp
- Home Improvement • Landscapers/Garden services
- Architect • Builder/Remodeler • New Business

**NEW CATEGORY**

1ST ROUND VOTING ENDS JULY 20! #BESTOFFC2023

BEST OF FALLS CHURCH ISSUE COMING AUGUST 17!
Why Falls Church? Exploring the Numbers Within The Little City

The Little City is known to its residents as a close-knit community with a vibrant atmosphere. The location, age demographics and walkability all contribute to creating a rare and golden city. Nevertheless, despite a general understanding of the public’s love of the Little City, the city took initiative on a community survey to evaluate demographics and satisfaction of living in Falls Church, with insight into what residents believe are important issues. The Community Satisfaction Survey, managed by Probolsky Research, was researched April 22 – May 3 of 2023, and can be found on the city’s website.

“We hired an outside firm to do it. It was not an opt-in kind of survey. They specifically selected 400 people that were representative of the entire city,” said Vice Mayor Letty Hardi. “We had a good balance across age groups, racial groups, people who lived geographically dispersed across the city, so we weren’t skewed towards one area.”

The survey revealed an upward trend of renters in the city, with 43 percent of residents that currently rent and 57 percent that own their properties. This upward trend in renting resulted from an increase in multifamily buildings, which were built after clear demand from those in Falls Church and the D.C. region. “Founders Row, for example, is over 90 percent occupied, so there’s clearly demand for people that live in Falls Church, if not the D.C. region,” Hardi said. “It’s not like we’re building housing and then no one’s occupying it. We’re building it and builders are building it because they know there’s demand for it.”

This increase in rental housing stock also resulted in an increase in younger Falls Church residents. With the younger demographic more likely to rent, rental properties have helped balance out the demographics of Falls Church. Currently, 32 percent of the population are age 39 and below, and 68 percent are 40 and above.

While this shift in housing stock has attracted some to Falls Church, the Community Satisfaction Survey also recorded housing affordability as a top concern for renters under the age of 40. Another top concern was controlling development. “We know that it’s a challenge for people to afford to live in Falls Church and live in the DC region….The pace of housing prices has far outpaced wage growth,” Hardi said. “That’s something that I know is a challenge even without the survey results, and so that’s something that is important to work on.”

Despite current negative opinion on housing affordability, Vice Mayor Hardi cited steps that have been taken to diminish the issue. Some changes that have taken place within the last decade include negotiating for non-expirable affordable housing units and negotiating for an increase in affordable housing units, as seen in the Broad & Washington Project and Founders Row. Upcoming initiatives and investments by the city include an affordable Homeownership Program, funded by Amazon grant money, and buying up and redeveloping properties. “We’ve done a lot on affordable housing,” Hardi said. “I think a lot of the data validates that those were the right things that the city should invest in. And I think if anything else, it just means we need to do more and faster because it’s such an important problem.”

The Community Satisfaction Survey likewise recorded what current residents most enjoy about Falls Church. Twenty-two percent of individuals appreciate Falls Church for its walkability, 16 percent for the small-town feel and 12 percent for its proximity to D.C. With its close-knit community and proximity to the nation’s capital, the Little City differentiates itself from surrounding jurisdictions. Overall, the survey found that 88.5 percent assess the quality of life as good.

“It’s that small community feel where you get big city options like restaurants, grocery stores, shopping, cool streets… but that kind of small community vibe where you don’t feel like you’re lost inside of a big city,” Hardi said. “I feel like we do a good job balancing between the small town feel with all the conveniences of being in a big city, because you can walk everywhere.”

With such insightful information, the plan is for an external community survey to take place every two years. With consistent surveying, the city will be able to look at trends over time.

“We hadn’t done this in over… I want to say 10 years—but this was something we had pushed on that was really important for us to regulate…. We’ll come back in 2025 and hopefully we’ll see some changes where we’ve tried to improve services or tried to make a difference in certain things,” Hardi said.
DISCOVER LUXURY OF A DIFFERENT KIND

Introducing The Mather in Tysons, Virginia—a forward-thinking destination for those 62 and better.

Forget what you thought you knew about senior living. Inquire today.

(703) 348.8522 | themathertysons.com

OPENING 2024

unlearn ordinary.
This year, a new co-living community launched in Falls Church, making it the first of its kind for both the city and the country. Perch Houses, developed by D.C.-based nonprofit Healthworx Studio, offers housing for middle-income women over 55-years-old. According to their June press release, Perch Houses believe “living in an affordable home” and experiencing shared community “will lead to improved quality of life.”

The founder and CEO of Perch Houses, Wing Pepper, said the idea behind the new co-living service addressed two problems in the current market: seniors having to age “alone and isolated” and the “forgotten middle” — those who have $50,000 — $250,000 in savings but also do not qualify for low-income subsidies.

“[Perch Houses] looked at those two problems in society, and we found that the group that’s hit the hardest by the combination of those two things are 55+ women,” Pepper said. “We looked at this group and the problems, and we’re like ‘We need to solve this in a different way.’”

In the current market, it is hard to know who to trust or what questions to ask,” said Katie VanLangen, “to know who to trust or what questions to ask,” said Katie VanLangen, “to know who to trust or what questions to ask,” said Katie VanLangen, “to know who to trust or what questions to ask,” said Katie VanLangen, “to know who to trust or what questions to ask,” said Katie VanLangen, “to know who to trust or what questions to ask,” said Katie VanLangen, “to know who to trust or what questions to ask,” said Katie VanLangen, “to know who to trust or what questions to ask,” said Katie VanLangen, “to know who to trust or what questions to ask,” said Katie VanLangen. “Another issue Perch addresses is rising rent prices since the pandemic,” which Pepper said went up “anywhere from 10 to 25 percent.” To solve this problem, along with creating a community and helping navigate the healthcare system, Pepper and the rest of the Perch team found homes through Zillow and various real estate websites to bring a co-living service for 55+ middle-income women.

So far, the first five houses for Perch will be located in Falls Church, which Pepper said is for three important reasons: the progressiveness of Fairfax County in encouraging new senior living models, the “great community” Falls Church provides by being diverse and near local cities such as D.C. and the company being D.C.-based so that they can be “hands-on” with their renters.

Women seeking to live in one of Perch’s houses can find three to four other women to room with, or reach out to the living service and fill out a “personality matching survey” to find roommates with similar personalities can live together. Since the founders of Perch, said from a “healthcare backdrop,” Pepper said the team is a “navigation service” for renters who may have questions about their health.

“It’s not just new in Northern Virginia, it’s new anywhere,” Pepper said when asked about how he hopes renters will react. “The second thing is joy from being around other people and not being isolated.”

As for what the future holds for Perch Houses and its prospective renters, Pepper said he hopes the company has created a “safe and affordable living environment for women” and finds the “best houses” for renters to live in.

“We can’t solve every problem,” Pepper said. “Our [goal] is to provide affordable living within a community in that age range for single women.”

Making the switch to clean, renewable energy is more affordable than ever thanks to Solarize Virginia, an initiative of Virginia nonprofit Local Energy Alliance Program (LEAP), and tax credits through the Inflation Reduction Act. Hundreds have already signed up for a free home assessment through Solarize for their homes since the 2023 program launched last Wednesday.

Solar accounts for 5.6 percent of Virginia electricity production — enough to power 500,000 homes. Thanks in part to Virginia’s Clean Economy Act (VCEA), this is expected to grow 50 percent by 2028, while adding nearly 30,000 new solar jobs.

In the current market, it is hard to know who to trust or what questions to ask,” said Katie VanLangen, Co-Executive Director of LEAP. “We ask the questions and negotiate the pricing so that participants don’t have to worry.”

Consumers that sign up through August 31, and sign an installation contract by September 15, will be eligible for bulk discounts, negotiated by Solarize, up to 20 percent. Over the past decade, prices have fallen 54 percent, with installations now ranging $15,000 to $25,000. This is before the tax credit up to 30 percent of installment cost, which saves consumers over $6,000 on average.

The tax credit may only be claimed against tax liability owed to the IRS — though any remaining credit can be “rolled over” annually through 2034. Solarize recommends discussing with a financial planner or accountant to strategize any changes in withholding.

Though popular during assessment, VanLangen says solar shingles and home battery systems are rarely chosen. A home battery system can double the cost of an install and, thanks to net metering, are unnecessary unless one wants to be outage-proof. Solar shingles are better looking, but produce less and cost much more.

VanLangen says, after completing an install through Solarize last year, her home electric bill dropped over 90 percent to under seven dollars per month. According to EnergySage, solar will reduce most electric bills by over 75 percent, with many eliminated entirely.

Though unable to “get paid” for overproduction, net metering is available over a set 12-month period (from the first month of use), allowing consumers to apply credits from high-production months to any bills received during the period. This is not a rolling period, however. Consumers who turn on their systems during winter months are encouraged to contact their electric company and adjust their 12-month period to begin in the early summer, so that credits are available to use during winter months, when shorter days reduce production.

In addition, VCEA provides consumers with one State Renewable Energy Credit (SREC) per megawatt-hour (MWh) produced by solar (most homes produce just one MWh per month), which can each be sold to utility companies for around $50.

New for 2023, nonprofits and places of worship can now apply through Solarize Virginia, where as in previous years only residential applications were considered. This could provide a substantial boost to the presence of solar in our region, with 8,200 nonprofits based in the DC metro area — the third largest concentration in the nation.

Area homeowners, nonprofits, and religious institutions are encouraged to sign up for a free consultation and assessment at solarizeva.org. In addition, Solarize has scheduled three information webinars on July 19, August 1, and August 17, register for free at solarizeva.org/events.