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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Community Foundation Launches Opportunity Index for Northern Virginia**

*Identifies Challenges and Barriers to Economic Success for Many in our Region*

February 5, 2018 (Oakton, VA) – The Community Foundation for Northern Virginia announced today the launch of The Opportunity Index for Northern Virginia, an interactive dashboard to serve as a data resource for community knowledge and strategic philanthropic giving, and to help grow philanthropy for our most economically disadvantaged populations. The data and accompanying report were prepared by The Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal Analysis, a nonprofit think-tank that provides credible, independent, and accessible information and analyses of fiscal and economic issues with particular attention to the impacts on low- and moderate-income persons. The Opportunity Index is available to the public for free at [www.cfnova.org/opportunityindex](http://www.cfnova.org/opportunityindex).

“The Community Foundation developed and launched the Opportunity Index to help our entire region better define, and then act on, the biggest challenges we face and the greatest opportunities we have,” said Eileen Ellsworth, Community Foundation President and CEO. “The data provides a common understanding of the dynamics at work in our region, providing insights and trends to guide our future work,” said Ellsworth.

Comprised of several key indicators reflecting our region’s economy, community health, civic life, and educational outcomes, the Opportunity Index includes data from 2000 – 2015 and will be updated annually to track changes and produce trend lines over time, advancing stakeholders’ understanding of the true needs of our region. The data is demographically, jurisdictionally, ethnically and racially disaggregated to shine a light on the reasons why some areas in Northern Virginia have more opportunity than others.

Northern Virginia is a diverse, growing region with a well-educated population and strong economy. However, there are a growing number of families who lack access to affordable housing and educational opportunities for their children. The data in this Index highlights trends that shine a light on these areas of opportunity and inequality. Our region is becoming more diverse - in 2015, 47% of children in Northern Virginia lived in immigrant households and people of color made up 48% of residents of the region's five highest-population localities, up from 35% in 2000. At the same time, there are growing numbers of poor school-aged children, increased income inequality, and a widening income gap between individuals of different racial or ethnic backgrounds.

"I am thrilled that the Community Foundation for Northern Virginia is taking this strong leadership position to monitor the health of the region and to quantify our most critical needs. The Opportunity Index will be an invaluable resource for leaders from business, government, community and nonprofit organizations to determine how to invest in the region's future. The dashboard serves as a 'report card' for our region and provides some indispensable data that will direct the future work of the Community Foundation, and help the region as a whole become ever more vibrant, inclusive and equitable," said Paul Leslie, CEO of Dovel Technologies and Community Foundation board member.

### **About The Community Foundation for Northern Virginia**

The Community Foundation for Northern Virginia grows philanthropy to respond to critical need and seed innovation in the region. Comprised of donor advised funds, permanent funds, giving circles, and other charitable endowments, the Community Foundation connects donors to community, and helps meet community needs with community resources.

In 2017 the Community Foundation awarded more than \$4.7 million in grants and scholarships and reported \$47 million in managed philanthropic assets.

For more information please visit us at [www.cfnova.org](http://www.cfnova.org) , on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/CommunityFoundationforNOVA/>, Twitter <https://twitter.com/CFNova>, and Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/communityfoundationfornova/>.

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