

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Health and Human Services

The Arlington Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is the Department that oversees the Health Department, Council on Aging, Youth Counseling Center, and the Veterans' Services Department. HHS also coordinates the activities of the following boards and commissions: Board of Health, Board of Youth Services, Council on Aging, Disability Commission, and the Human Rights Commission. Additionally, the HHS manages the Food Pantry, Widows Trust Fund Commission, Youth Health and Safety Coalition, and the Health and Human Services Charitable Corporation.

The mission of the Department of Health and Human Services is to protect the health of the public and assist residents with accessing services to meet basic human needs.



BOARD OF HEALTH

The three-member Board of Health meets on a regular basis. At the meetings, environmental health concerns are addressed, public hearings are held, and policy review is performed. The Board of Health met six times in 2015 and conducted the following hearings: three food code variance requests, three keeping-of-hens permit requests, and one application to work with Recombinant DNA (rDNA). The Board granted three foodcode variance requests, two keeping-of-hens permits, and one permit to work with rDNA at a laboratory.

In October 2015 the Board began working on regulations to restrict the sale of medical marijuana. The Board expects to hold public hearings to discuss the regulations, make any necessary changes, and adopt the regulations by April 2016.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

The Health Department is located at 27 Maple Street in the Arlington Senior Center, located behind Town Hall. The Board of Health is required by State statutes and regulations to perform many important and crucial duties relative to the protection of public health and safety, the control of disease, the promotion of safe and sanitary living conditions, and the protection of the environment from damage and pollution. These mandated requirements are fulfilled by environmental health staff and public health nursing within the Health Department.

Environmental Health Permitting and Inspections

Staff annually permits and regularly inspects restaurants, tobacco retailers, tanning establishments, body art establishments, swimming pools, chicken coops, camps, the ice-skating rink and three bathing beaches. Inspectors from the Department also investigate numerous resident complaints related to any health issue within the community, ranging from trash and dumpster complaints to housing code violations, pest activity, and noise and odor concerns. The environmental health division is comprised of two full-time inspectors and a full-time Public Health Associate from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The Department also contracts with three food safety consultants to conduct a portion of mandated food establishment inspections.

The Department has worked diligently over the past year to apply for grants, and conduct mandated inspections. The Department continues to work closely with other Town agencies (police, fire, inspectional services, council on aging, schools, public works, etc.) to address public health issues in the community.

Tobacco Control

In March 2015 the Health Department implemented a ban on the sale of flavored tobacco and nicotine delivery products within the Town. In 2015 staff conducted thirty-eight tobacco compliance checks, which resulted in no violations, fines, or suspensions.

The Department continued to work with the Arlington Housing Authority (AHA) to help implement their smoke-free policy at all five AHA properties by providing cessation services to interested residents. Department staff conducted multiple meetings to promote the cessation programs and was able to assist sixteen residents with smoking cessation products (nicotine patches, gum, and lozenges) and programs (hypnotherapy and group meetings with an addiction specialist).

Keeping of Hens

The Health Department is charged with enforcing the Keeping of Hens/Poultry Bylaw. Any resident who wishes to keep hens as pets or for the purposes of home egg production, gardening, or similar purposes must obtain a Permit to Keep Hens from the Board of Health. In 2015 the Department reviewed three applications, granted two new permits and denied one application. The Health Department renewed nine permits and conducted twelve inspections of hen coops/pens.

Swimming Pools

There are nine semi-public swimming pools in the Town of Arlington that are inspected by the Department on an annual basis to ensure compliance with 105 CMR 435.000: Minimum Standards for Swimming Pools (State Sanitary Code: Chapter V). The eight outdoor

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

swimming pools, located at various apartment buildings in Town and the Winchester Country Club, are inspected in the spring/early summer prior to opening for the season. The Arlington Boys and Girls Club, the only indoor semi-public pool in the Town, is open year round.

Recreational Camps for Children

The Department issued seven recreational camp permits in 2015 and inspected each camp to ensure compliance with the minimum housing, health, safety, and sanitary protections for children in the care of camps that operate in the Town of Arlington.

| Permit Issued by BOH | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|---------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Food | 345 | 366 | 357 | 365 |
| Tobacco | 27 | 25 | 20 | 19 |
| Waste Hauler | 14 | 13 | 15 | 16 |
| Funeral Director | 4 | 4 | 8 | 9 |
| Tanning Establishment | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Public Pool | 8 | 8 | 9 | 7 |
| Public Beach | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Ice Rink | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Keeping of Hens* | 4 | 6 | 8 | 12 |
| Camps | 3 | 3 | 6 | 7 |
| Body Art Establishment | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Body Art Practitioner | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Bodywork Establishment ** | NA | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Bodywork Therapist ** | NA | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 414 | 437 | 431 | 443 |

*Keeping of Hens Bylaw was approved at Town Meeting 5/6/2009.

**Bodywork regulations were implemented on November 1, 2013

| Inspection Type | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Food Establishment | 565 | 716 | 642 | 549 |
| Tobacco Compliance Check | 52 | 68 | 58 | 38 |
| Housing | 202 | 180 | 205 | 220 |
| Demolition Inspection | 10 | 11 | 17 | 27 |
| Nuisance Inspection | 226 | 256 | 297 | 318 |
| Keeping of Hens* | 5 | 9 | 12 | 12 |
| Bodywork Establishment** | NA | 20 | 10 | 10 |
| Total | 1,060 | 1,260 | 1,241 | 1,174 |

*Keeping of Hens Bylaw was approved at Town Meeting 5/6/2009.

**Bodywork regulations were implemented on November 1, 2013.

Food Protection

In accordance with 105 CMR 590.000: Minimum Sanitation Standards for Food Establishments, the Health Department is required, as the regulatory authority, to enforce the provisions of this code. The purpose of this code is to safeguard public health and provide to consumers food that is safe, unadulterated, and honestly presented. This code establishes definitions, sets standards for management and personnel, food operations, and equipment facilities, and provides for food establishment plan review, permit issuance, inspection, employee restriction, and permit suspension.

The Department assigns each food establishment a risk-based category. A food establishment that sells packaged food, such as a convenience store, is considered low risk and is assigned to a category one and is inspected one time per year. A food establishment that serves food to a highly susceptible population, such as a nursing home, is considered high risk and is assigned a category four and is inspected four times per year.

In 2015 the Department issued 202 food establishment permits and conducted 464 routine and follow-up food inspections. Additionally, the Department issued 163 temporary food establishment permits, including the Farmers Market permits, and inspected seventy-seven temporary food vendors, including those at events such as the Feast of the East, Taste of Arlington, Greek Festival, Farmer's Market, Town Day, Arlington Alive, and other various public events throughout the year.

The Department also investigated six food complaints and held three administrative meetings to discuss food safety. The Board heard testimony from three establishments applying and receiving approval for variances from the 105 CMR 590.000. Fifteen new food establishments opened or changed ownership, including three residential kitchens, and twelve establishments closed.

| Type of Food Permits Issued | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Food Establishment Permits | 177 | 181 | 187 | 187 |
| Mobile Food Permits | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| Residential Kitchen Permits | 10 | 11 | 15 | 14 |
| Farmers Market Permits | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| Temporary Event Food Permit | 143 | 158 | 138 | 148 |

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Housing

The Department conducted 176 inspections of rental and owner-occupied housing units in 2015 in accordance with 105 Code of Massachusetts Regulations 410.000, Massachusetts Housing Code. When a housing inspection is requested by a resident, an inspector conducts the inspection and may cite a landlord for violations of the housing code. The landlord is then ordered to correct violations. An inspector conducts a final inspection to verify the violations have been corrected. Violations documented in 2015 included: unsanitary living conditions, insufficient heat, water damage, leaking plumbing fixtures, lead paint determinations, and insect and rodent infestations. Additionally, Health Inspectors worked closely and at length with the Building and Fire Departments concerning a large scale fire at Brookside Condominiums, and a building wide power outage at Watermill Condominiums.



Health Compliance Officer conducts housing inspection

The Hoarding Response Team (HRT) investigated six new hoarding cases and followed up on fifteen ongoing cases. The HRT is a collaboration between Police, Fire, and Health officials. The team consists of two health inspectors, a police officer and a clinical responder. In most cases, the team was able to work with the individuals to bring the homes into compliance without condemning the property. The Department did, however, condemn three properties due to uninhabitable conditions. The team conducted three presentations to other municipalities on HRT protocols.

The Department continues to work closely with the Council on Aging, Veteran Services, and Minuteman Senior Services to assist senior residents with alternate housing and services, such as cleaning and organizing.

In 2015 the Department conducted twenty-seven inspections at properties awaiting demolition in order to ensure the health and safety of the site. The inspection requires asbestos removal, pest control, dust control, and other control measures to protect the health of the public.

Public Health Nursing

Influenza Vaccinations

The Health Department, with the assistance of the Medical Reserve Corp (MRC) volunteers, administered 1,700 vaccinations in 2015, a decrease compared to the 2,300 vaccinations administered in 2014. The decrease is mainly attributable to the State's change in vaccine guidelines whereby State supplied vaccine can only be used for children 18 years of age or younger. Increased competition from pharmacies has decreased senior participation.



CBS News interviews Arlington resident at flu clinic

With the change in the State's guidelines, the Health Department revised its outreach plan to include vaccination clinics at each school and also held public clinics for Arlington children attending private schools. The Health Department purchased vaccine for seniors, who are particularly vulnerable to influenza.

The vaccination clinics continue to receive positive feedback from residents, who appreciate the convenience and efficiency of the clinics. The clinics also serve as practice for the Department's emergency preparedness plan should the Town be faced with a crisis. The Health Department is thankful to the MRCs, who provided 390 volunteer hours of medical and non-medical support, that made the vaccination clinics such a success.

The Health Department continues to coordinate with the University of Massachusetts and Northeastern University to provide nursing students with public health experience. Nursing students assist HHS with a number of activities, including administering flu shots, wellbeing visits with seniors, and outreach and education related to health promotion activities.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Communicable Disease Surveillance

To protect the community against the spread of contagious illnesses, Arlington continues work with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) in conducting online disease reporting through the Massachusetts Virtual Epidemiology Network (MAVEN). State law requires that doctors, hospitals, and laboratories report contagious diseases including: tuberculosis, pertussis, and salmonella among others. When a clinician diagnoses a resident with a contagious disease, the public health nurse is mandated to conduct an investigation to determine if further control measures are needed. The illness is then recorded and reviewed to identify and respond to any possible disease outbreaks. The online reporting system has streamlined disease investigation and has assisted the MDPH with early detection of contagious disease trends beyond community boundaries.

Of note in 2015, additional surveillance was conducted at the behest of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the MDPH for residents returning from Ebola endemic areas, such as Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia, and other affected countries. None of the four Arlington residents who traveled to West Africa showed any symptoms of Ebola or other Viral Hemorrhagic Fevers. Per CDC guidelines, patients were monitored for fever and concerning symptoms, twice daily, for twenty-one days after their last potential exposure. In the event a patient became symptomatic the Town, MDPH, and the CDC would implement the CDC's protocols to provide patient care while mitigating risk to others.

In the next column is a partial list of communicable diseases monitored by the public health nurse. For a complete list, please visit the Town's website at www.arlingtonma.gov/health.

Most notable from this table, cases of influenza in 2015 were significantly higher than in years past. It is unclear if this is a result of an under-vaccinated population, the result of the 2014/2015 flu vaccine being a poor match for the circulating flu strains, or if a combination of factors were causative. The Centers for Disease Control reported the formulation for the 2015/2016 flu vaccine was revised with the goal of providing greater efficacy of the vaccine.

| Communicable Disease | 2013* | 2014 | 2015 |
|--|------------|------------|------------|
| Babesiosis | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| Campylobacter Enteritis | 10 | 14 | 11 |
| Clostridium Perfringens** | -- | 1 | 2 |
| Enterovirus | 0 | 2 | 1 |
| Giardia | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| Group A strep | 0 | 3 | 1 |
| Hepatitis B | 21 | 12 | 12 |
| Hepatitis C | 37 | 35 | 30 |
| Human Granulocytic Anaplasmosis | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Influenza | 60 | 104 | 154 |
| Invasive Bacterial Infection | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Legionellosis | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| Lyme Disease | 39 | 41 | 32 |
| Pertussis | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| Salmonella | 4 | 6 | 6 |
| Shigatoxin | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Shigellosis | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Strep pneumonia -invasive | 1 | 4 | 1 |
| Tuberculosis <i>contact, and suspected cases in addition to probable and confirmed cases</i> | 48 | 36 | 38 |
| Varicella | 3 | 7 | 8 |
| Viral Hemorrhagic Fever (suspect contacts) | -- | -- | 4 |
| Total | 237 | 275 | 317 |

-- denotes disease not tracked/present in those years

Weights and Measures

To ensure compliance with the Consumer and Merchant Protection Act, the Sealer of Weights and Measures conducts inspections of scales, scanners, and dispensing equipment. This includes retail stores, gas stations, oil trucks, and food establishments. The Sealer responds to all consumer complaints to ensure fairness and accuracy.

As merchants are inspected annually, compliance with standards and accuracy of merchant measuring devices has increased steadily. The Sealer of Weights and Measures determines the amount of savings by computing the amount of fuel pumped each year from a particular measuring device, such as a gas pump.

Since 2010 the Department has contracted with the Town of Belmont to provide sealing services as Belmont does not fund a sealer position.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Below is a table of devices sealed in Arlington and Belmont in 2015:

| Device Sealed | Arlington | Belmont |
|--|------------|------------|
| Scales 10 lbs and under | 11 | 5 |
| Scales 100lbs and under | 99 | 55 |
| Gasoline pump meters | 139 | 108 |
| Vehicle tank meters (heating oil trucks) | 31 | 0 |
| Taxi Cab Meters | 34 | 0 |
| Bulk heating oil tank meters | 3 | 0 |
| Bottle and can return dispensers | 2 | 3 |
| Individual Weights | 0 | 76 |
| Other devices | 3 | 2 |
| Total | 322 | 249 |

Food Pantry

2015 was a year of tremendous growth for the Arlington Food Pantry. A second distribution site, located at 117 Broadway was opened, which allowed the Food Pantry to increase its distributions to four distributions a month. The additional space also provided the opportunity to offer more fresh and frozen food items such as produce, meat, and dairy products through partnerships with other agencies, including the Greater Boston Food Bank, Food Link, and Boston Area Gleaners.



Fresh produce ready for distribution at the food pantry

Volunteers continue to be the backbone of the Food Pantry with approximately seventy-five volunteers distributing food each month. During 2015, 2,700 visits were made to the pantry and approximately 12,000 bags of groceries were given away. Each month 150 Arlington families visit the pantry to supplement their food needs.



BOARD OF YOUTH SERVICES /
ARLINGTON YOUTH COUNSELING CENTER
(AYCC)



AYCC receives \$100,000 Cummings Foundation grant

The Arlington Youth Counseling Center (AYCC) is a fully licensed, community-based mental health counseling center serving Arlington youth (ages 3-21) and their families. It is the mission of AYCC to promote and support the social and emotional wellbeing of all Arlington's youth and families, regardless of their ability to pay. AYCC provides a variety of high quality, innovative, and therapeutic outpatient and school-based mental health services, including individual, group, and family counseling, psychiatric evaluation and consultation, and medication management. Through local grants and other fundraising initiatives, AYCC also provides case management services to residents with basic resource needs (housing, food, fuel assistance, health insurance coverage etc.), and offers support groups to identified at-risk populations, including survivors of domestic violence, substance-involved youth, and youth on the autism spectrum.

Building on the momentum of the past several years, AYCC continued to strengthen its organizational capacity to provide mental health counseling and other support services to the community in a more self-sustaining way. The agency did this, in part, by expanding its work within the Arlington Public Schools, maximizing third party payments and other revenue streams, hiring additional fee-for-service clinicians, and increasing the minimum case load requirements for AYCC staff. As a result, in 2015, AYCC achieved its highest level of productivity in recent years, providing over 5,350 counseling and psychiatric sessions to over 350 youth and

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

families, including 192 new clients. Through the use of an Electronic Medical Records system, and a more streamlined billing process, AYCC also saw an increase in insurance reimbursements and client copayments over the past few years. In 2015, AYCC generated \$271,225 in insurance reimbursements and \$52,737 in client co-payments, a 19% increase and 43% increase over 2014, respectively.

In addition to the individual and family counseling sessions totaled above, AYCC clinicians ran several therapeutic groups throughout the year, including two stress management groups at Arlington High School, a new cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and mindfulness group at the Ottoson Middle School, a social dynamics group at the Ottoson, a clinic-based group for children experiencing separation, a clinic-based group for parents of challenging teens, and the First Step group for survivors of domestic violence. Hundreds of clinical hours are dedicated to the planning for, and running of, these groups.



District Attorney Marian Ryan reviews warning signs of domestic violence with salon stylists

AYCC highlights from 2015

In May of 2015, AYCC became the proud recipient of a \$100,000 grant from the Cummings Foundation to support school-based counseling and mental health consultation for children in Arlington elementary schools. AYCC was one of 100 local (Greater Boston area) charities to receive the Cummings *100K for 100 Grant*, which will be dispersed to AYCC over a three year period. This funding will enable AYCC to continue its important work within the Arlington Public Schools, providing school-based counseling to Arlington students at no cost to the school system.

For a second year, AYCC received critical funding from the State to support its mission, and to help offset the cost of providing mental health services to the community. AYCC is truly grateful for its many supporters, chief among them being Senator Ken Donnelly and Representative Sean Garballey who advocated tirelessly on behalf of AYCC for this much needed funding.

With approval from the Town Manager, AYCC created a new full-time position to address the increasing

demand for case management services in the community, and to coordinate groups and services for survivors of domestic violence. The new Domestic Violence and Community Resource Specialist will oversee the First Step program, ensuring Arlington residents have access to services available to them.

Through a grant funded by the Community Health Network Area 17 (CHNA17), AYCC coordinated several trainings on domestic violence. In collaboration with Reach Beyond Domestic Violence, AYCC helped organize a training for the Arlington Police Department, and in collaboration with the Middlesex District Attorney's Office, AYCC helped organize a training for salon professionals on how to recognize warning signs of domestic abuse and make safe referrals to local resources.

AYCC continued to focus on professional development among its staff, running monthly clinical case conferences, as well as organizing and funding staff trainings on topics including Group Work, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD).

AYCC collaborated with the Arlington Youth Health and Safety Coalition and the Visual Art Department at Arlington High School (AHS) to update and brighten the therapy rooms at AYCC. Visual art students at AHS created eleven colorful and serene murals for AYCC to help foster a more restorative atmosphere for children and teens.



AHS student mural for AYCC

In collaboration with the Board of Youth Services, and with the support of community partners and generous donors, AYCC raised over \$60,000 from fundraising initiatives and events, including the Annual Team Up for AYCC Soccer Tournament and the 5th Annual Out on the Town Gala. At this year's Gala, AYCC and the Board of Youth Services honored Senator Ken Donnelly for his ongoing support for children's mental health services and advocacy on behalf of AYCC.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

ARLINGTON YOUTH HEALTH & SAFETY COALITION (AYHSC)

Arlington Youth Health & Safety Coalition is a federally funded community-based coalition whose mission is to prevent and reduce substance abuse and other risk behaviors that adversely affect youth in Arlington. The Coalition includes representatives from the public sector (police, schools, healthcare, local government) and private agencies (churches, businesses, youth-serving organizations), as well as parents and youth. Employing a public health approach to prevention and intervention, AYHSC focuses on population level change through education, environmental initiatives, policy development, and improving youth access to treatment.

The past year marked year six of the ten-year federal Drug Free Communities Program (DFC) grant. AYHSC also received grant funding from Mount Auburn Hospital (CHNA 17) and the Sanborn Foundation. The Coalition provided over 3,760 hours of substance abuse prevention services, distributed over 120 types of media (129,720 views in print and online), implemented ten significant programs and policies within the community, and generated over \$33,000 in cash, volunteer, and in-kind resources from Arlington Public Schools, Arlington Police Department, Department of Health, and Arlington Recreation. Coalition members and community partners volunteered in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of prevention activities, which are highlighted below.

2015 Coalition Highlights

- Hosted an Arlington Community Forum, “The Opioid Crisis: Identifying Community Solutions in Arlington,” which featured a keynote presentation by Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey.
- Collaborated with the Board of Health to increase the age to purchase tobacco to 21 and ban the sale of flavored tobacco products in Arlington.
- Modified the AHS chemical use policy to include marijuana and e-cigarette prohibition.
- Changed the process of documenting and handling a student who is caught violating the tobacco policy on school grounds by



Community Forum on the Opioid Crisis

revising the official APS Tobacco Violation Policy to include a motivational interviewing, an educational component, and a restorative justice meeting.

- Facilitated a Sticker Shock campaign in local alcohol retail stores in which Coalition members and students adhered stickers to alcohol products to raise public awareness about the minimum drinking age law, and to discourage people over 21 from purchasing and providing alcohol for minors.
- Hosted a door-to-door prescription drug collection event at five Arlington subsidized housing facilities that serve the elderly, disabled, and/or homebound.
- Administered the 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) to the Ottoson Middle School.
- Facilitated the fourth annual Health Recreation Cops (HRC) Summer Experience to youth in grades 1 through 6, which included health and safety related lessons, and recreational activities.
- Hosted a booth at the annual Arlington Town Day.



Representative Sean Garballey and Coalition members at Town Day

- Conducted three five-week series of Guiding Good Choices workshops, a parenting program to improve family management and communication, and reduce risk factors for youth substance abuse.
- Hosted a parent forum, “Marijuana and the Adolescent Brain” presented by Boston Children’s Hospital Alcohol and Substance Abuse Program pediatrician, Dr. Scott Hadland.
- Created an official Coalition Student Advisor club at AHS and elected nine student officers to leadership roles within the club.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

COUNCIL ON AGING



The Arlington Council on Aging (COA) primary responsibilities are to identify the needs of Arlington's elder population, and to design, promote, and implement services and programs to address such needs. In addition, the COA coordinates existing services in the community on behalf of the senior, as well as providing various town offices vital information factoring in the needs of the elder population, making Arlington a dignified and livable community for its older community members.

The growing number of seniors is a developing challenge for the Town of Arlington. The 2010 federal census counted 9,245 elders (60+ years) in Arlington which when projected to 2030 suggest that one-third of the projected population of Arlington, or 15,193 residents, will be seniors (Metropolitan Area Planning Council).



Walk the Rink Program kick off

The COA staff continues to serve increasing numbers of seniors and their concerned adult children regarding financial distress with housing, food, fuel costs, and rising medical costs. COA staff exhausts all resources to address these concerns; however, many needs are often unmet due to limited social services. The COA utilizes the collective staff experience in providing information leading to indirect and direct access to aging resources for seniors, their families, and community to organizations in an effort to lead a dignified life in Arlington.

The COA is also experiencing a surge in participating in programs across the spectrum. Program participation is strong and consistent. The COA serves as a field-training site for students from UMASS Boston, UMASS Lowell, Northeastern, Simmons College, Em-

erson College, and Salem State University.

Transportation within the COA is a very active component of COA's services. The Van operation utilizes a number of resources, including volunteers to meet the needs of the seniors in Arlington. As an enterprise fund, the COA Van Transportation is dependent upon generous grants from The Trustees of the Symmes Hospital, CDBG allocations, and fees collected from riders. Transportation is a critical component of COA's mission as it helps reduce isolation by providing a means to be actively engaged in COA programs and the community. Further, transportation reduces barriers related to access to health care. There are three options seniors have access to: the COA Van, Dial-A-Ride Taxi, and Medical Escort.



Friends of the Council on Aging present a grant for Walk the Rink

Volunteers are vital to the success of the COA, with volunteer support providing more than 8,000 volunteer hours per year. Volunteers provide support in areas such as administrative support, program development, program operations, medical escort, and annual programs such as the Thanksgiving Day Meal delivery and the Holiday Stocking program through the Friends of Arlington COA. COA staff is beyond grateful to the many hands and hours these outstanding volunteers contribute to the mission of the COA. Volunteers are honored for their service at an annual luncheon.

The Senior Center also hosts Minuteman Senior Services which operates the "Eating Together" Meal site at the Senior Center and provides home-delivered "Meals-on-Wheels."

In December 2015 long time and beloved van driver, Donald Boudreau, retired after 29 years of service. The Town thanks Donald for his many years of dedicated service to the Town and its seniors.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

COA Highlights for 2015

- Received a \$32,500 grant from the Elizabeth and George L. Sanborn Foundation for the Treatment and Cure for Cancer, Inc. to provide rides to seniors for cancer treatments.
- Received a \$15,000 grant from the Symmes Hospital Funding for Medical Transportation to supplement the COA Van budget to provide seniors rides to medical appointments.
- Received over \$8,000 in mini grants from the Friends of the Arlington Council on Aging to support health and wellness programs, social functions, and emergency financial assistance for the benefit of Arlington Seniors.
- 942 individuals participated in COA programs; 1,193 individuals that received one or more services; and 281 individuals utilized COA Transportation services.
- Added four new intergenerational programs.

Community Partnering Efforts

Partnering with municipal and community organizations creates productive relationships and more efficient means to deliver programs and services helping us to meet the mission of the COA. Minuteman Senior Services serves as our Aging Service Access Point (ASAP). COA would be limited in program support and selection without the Arlington Recreation Department (Walk the Rink), Arlington Boys and Girls Club (Intergenerational), Retired Men's Club, and Bateman Catering (Thanksgiving Meal), Lahey Clinic and Medical Hospital (A Matter of Balance and 20 weeks of Farmers Market for fifty seniors), Enhance Asian Community on Health, Inc. for cultural enrichment and outreach to the mandarin Chinese seniors, and the Friends of Arlington Council on Aging through their gifts toward programs and services.

Organizations such as AARP and SHINE provide free tax preparation and health insurance guidance while Sean Condon, Rick Fenton and Noreen Murphy continue to donate their time monthly providing free consultation on long term care, financial matters and elder law issues respectively.

The COA appreciates the support from the Arlington Schools. The Arlington High School Football team provided free fall cleanup to twenty-four households. The Ottoson Middle School, under the LINKS Program, assisted seniors with shoveling and light outside tasks as well as providing technology workshops free of charge for seniors. The Bishop, Brackett, and St. Agnes elementary schools designed and provided Thanksgiving and holiday cards for more than 123 seniors. My Place To Grow and ABC Pre-School periodically entertained seniors at the Senior Center. This multigenerational relationship benefits both seniors and youth in Town.

VETERANS' SERVICES

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts began providing services for veterans following the Revolutionary War. In 1861 the legislature formalized Chapter 115 and the establishment of the Department of Veteran Services. By directive each town is required to maintain a Veterans' Service Department to provide benefits to veterans and dependents.

Benefits are available through Chapter 115 and from federal agencies (Veterans' Administration). State benefits are based on "means tests" and provide financial and medical assistance for veterans and dependents. Additional services for food, shelter, clothing, and housing are available. Bonuses and annuities are available to veterans that provided wartime service to our nation. Annuity payments are provided to 100% service connected disabled veterans and Gold Star survivors. Support services are provided for educational benefits, employment benefits, and housing services. Support services are also provided for military funerals.

In addition to the state level benefits discussed above, the Director assists veterans in filing applications seeking federal service connected disability compensation. Assistance is provided to veterans seeking federal pensions for non-service connected pensions. Additionally, Veterans Services provides support and direction to veterans seeking enrollment in the VA Healthcare System.



Veterans Services Director presides over Memorial Day Services

Commemorative ceremonies were conducted for Memorial Day and Veterans Day. For Memorial Day, Veterans Services decorated over 5,500 veterans' graves at Mt. Pleasant Cemetery and St. Paul's Cemetery with flags and also assured the maintenance of the veterans' burial lots.

In 2015 Veterans Services fielded the following requests: seventy-five inquiries for Chapter 115 Benefits with eighty-one active cases; forty-three requests for military discharge documents; thirty-four inquiries regarding VA Healthcare enrollment; sixty-three inquiries regarding federal service connected disability pensions;

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

twenty-eight inquires regarding federal Aid and Attendance claims; seventeen housing inquiries; and eighty-four administrative requests/inquires.

2015 Veterans Services Highlights

- The Director is now officially certified by the state Department of Veterans' Services regarding state and federal level benefits programs available to veterans and dependents. This is the first time the State has certified local veteran agents.
- The Board of Selectmen officially appointed a seven-member Veterans Council focusing on veteran related issues.
- The Director completed the largest computer-mapping project in the Town's history by satellite mapping over 5,500 veteran graves at Mt. Pleasant Cemetery. This project allows for better tracking of veteran graves, in conjunction with the annual Memorial Day Flags on Graves Program.

COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

In its twenty-second year of service, the Commission on Disability continued to provide information, referral, guidance, and technical assistance to Arlington officials, residents, public and private agencies, and others to ensure that people with physical, sensory, cognitive, mental illnesses and other disabilities have equal access to town facilities, services, and programs.

During FY 2015 the Commission had a full slate of nine volunteer Commissioners. As mandated by State law, the majority of Commissioners have a disability. The mandate brings an intimate and informed understanding of disabilities to the Commission's agenda and ultimate decisions. The Commission continues to bring awareness to Arlington policy makers and other residents as to the legal rights of people with disabilities, enforcing those rights and working towards community inclusion to make Arlington a stronger town by capitalizing on the strengths that each person living and working here has to offer.

2015 Commission on Disability Highlights

- The Commission co-sponsored the seventh annual Diversity Career Fair at Arlington Town Hall. Twenty-six employers from health care, financial, retail, and non-profit organizations participated in the career fair.
- The Commission co-sponsored a Transition Fair at Arlington Town Hall. The purpose of the Transition Fair was for individuals with disabilities transitioning into adult life and their parents to obtain information about available resources.

- The Commission had two booths at Town Day 2015. One booth was available to answer questions and provide resources about disability legislation. The other booth provided an educational puppet troupe for the purpose of teaching children about various disabilities and educational and medical differences. The puppet troupe used frank and often humorous communication of facts and feeling between the puppet characters and individuals, mostly children attended the booth.
- The Commission continued its curb cut ramp project with the installation of eighty-two curb cut ramps during 2015. These curb cut ramps bring the total to 503 curb cut ramps that have been installed since 2010.
- The Commission reviewed and issued recommendations on several variance requests that had been submitted by developers to the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board.
- A self-evaluation of necessary sidewalk repairs and improvements to public ways was completed.
- The Commission continued to meet with Town officials to discuss the rights of people with disabilities to work towards full community inclusion within the Town of Arlington.
- The Commission worked with the True Story Theatre to discuss and identify through theatre, challenges faced by individuals with visible and invisible disabilities.
- The Commission developed a new member information manual.
- The Commission invited Representative Sean Garballey to a meeting in order to discuss and provide input regarding legislative bills being debated before the State Legislature. At the meeting the Commission congratulated Sean for being named the House Legislative Member of the year by the ARC of Massachusetts and the Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council.
- The Commission met with the Director of Planning and Community Development to discuss and provide input for improving accessibility at the Senior Center Building. The result has been the addition of two handicapped parking spaces and plans to replace some of the bricks at the Senior Center with a smoother, safer surface.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Goals 2016

Commission goals will continue to revolve around the very clear parameters of the Americans with Disability Act.

- The Commission plans to continue to advocate for a safer driveway, and sidewalk surfaces at the Senior Center Building.
- The Commission will continue to advocate for and ensure the rights of Arlington residents living with disabilities.
- The Commission plans to co-sponsor at the Arlington Town Hall, with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, the eighth Annual Diversity Career Fair.
- The Commission will continue to work with the True Story Theatre in 2016, with a focus on people with mental illness and other invisible and visible disabilities, in order to make our community more aware and educated about this significant group of people.
- The Commission will continue to identify areas where curb cuts are needed and will work with Town Departments to continue improvements made over recent years regarding snow and ice removal.
- The Commission plans to advocate for additional handicapped parking spaces in the business districts along Massachusetts Avenue.

The Commission meets on the third Wednesday of each month at 4:00 p.m. in the conference room of the Housing and Disability Program Office located at 20 Academy Street Suite 203, Arlington (the Senior Center Building). Meetings are open to the public and residents are invited to attend to observe or voice their opinion.



20 Academy Street, Senior Center Offices

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

The Arlington Human Rights Commission (AHRC) was created by Town Meeting in 1993 to advance issues related to the fair and equal treatment of individuals and to create a mechanism for addressing complaints arising out of these issues. The mission of the AHRC is to work individually and collaboratively with other groups in our community to celebrate the ever-changing tapestry of the Town, and to emphasize, through educational outreach, the danger of intolerance at every level. The Town Manager, School Committee, and the Town Moderator have appointing authority for the thirteen-member commission.

Community Education and Outreach

During the course of the year, the Commission sponsored or co-sponsored several events:

- Sponsored a screening of “Selma,” the acclaimed film about Martin Luther King’s campaign to secure equal voting rights. The film was screened at the Arlington Capital and was free and open to the public. Several dozen people attended.
- Communicated events and matters of interest to the public through Facebook and Twitter as a cost-effective way to reach a broad segment of the public on matters relating to the Commission and to promote events that celebrate the diversity of Arlington. AHRC followers on Facebook and Twitter have grown by 35% and 145%, respectively.
- Co-sponsored the Town’s Martin Luther King Celebration.
- Co-sponsored with the Diversity Task Group a February event entitled, “Race and Class Bias and the Criminal Justice System.”
- Collaborated with local non-profit organization, True Story Theater (TST), and committed to work with TST to sponsor three events with a focus on LGBTQ+ youth issues.
- Continued to offer a citizen’s forum at the beginning of each monthly meeting for concerned citizens to address the Commissions on concerns relating to issues of equality and fairness.
- In response to a 2014 citizen request the Commission developed and implemented a needs assessment and survey regarding LGBTQ issues. Survey questions were included in the Town’s 2020 mailing and additional surveys are available on line and in print.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Collaborating in Arlington Public Schools

Liaisons continued between the Commission and each of Arlington's public schools and METCO. Additionally, a commissioner joined the regular meetings held between representatives from the Diversity Task Force and the Superintendent. In response to a 2014 citizen request, the Commission established a joint subcommittee with the Arlington School Committee to investigate allegations of a discriminatory bias in school discipline. By year's end, the subcommittee was concluding its investigation and is preparing to issue its conclusion.

Working with Town Government

The AHRC continued to spearhead the Response Coordination Team (RCT), which has developed a protocol to be used in the event of a hate incident or hate crime, and is composed of Superintendent of Schools Kathy Bodie, School Committee member Joe Curro, Reverend Christine Elliott, Arlington Public Information Officer Joan Roman, APD Chief Frederick Ryan, Chair of the Diversity Task Group of Vision 2020 Miriam Stein, and Reverend David Swaim.

The Commission studied and addressed two warrant articles that dealt with the Commission and its operation. The Commission voted "no action" on those warrants. Following the conclusion of Town Meeting, the Commission worked on a warrant article concerning the Commission and its operations to be discussed at the 2016 Town Meeting.

The Commission voted on a change in its bylaws to include "gender expression" as a protected class.

Incidents and Complaints

The Commission received no formal complaints although it fielded inquiries from concerned citizens that did not result in formal complaints. The Commission collected the following information regarding hate incidents occurring in Town from citizens and the APD:

| Incidents | 2015 |
|--|------|
| Complaints of tagging/Graffiti of hate messages | 2 |
| Hate crimes/Incidents forward to Commission from APD | 2 |
| Other hate incidents | 1 |
| Other | 1 |

In response to an incident concerning racial epithets in connection with an art installation at Spy Pond, the Commission prepared a letter for publication in the June 18 *Arlington Advocate* regarding the incident. In response to repeated vandalism to a Black Lives Matter sign at the Unitarian Universalist Association, the Commission drafted a letter for the December 12 *Arlington*

Advocate regarding the incident.

The Commission continues to work with the APD and APS to learn of, track and, where necessary, address incidents involving graffiti, texting, racist speech, anti-Semitic speech and threats, and racial profiling.

2016 Goals

- Continue to foster the school liaison program.
- Sponsor dialogues on other issues of interest to Arlington residents.
- Disseminate and analyze the results of the Needs Assessment Survey for the LBGTQ Community.
- Continue to participate in Town Day.
- Increase collaboration with relevant Town groups.
- Increase outreach to other community groups.