

# HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

HEALTH  
& HUMAN  
SERVICES



The Arlington Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) consists of the following divisions:

- Health Department
- Council on Aging
- Veterans Services
- Youth Health and Safety Coalition
- Youth Counseling Center

The Department also coordinates the activities of the following boards and commissions:

- Board of Health
- Council on Aging
- Veterans Council
- Board of Youth Services
- Disability Commission
- Human Rights Commission
- Rainbow Commission

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. In order to accomplish the mission of the Department, it relies on many different sources of funding including Town, state and federal funds, grants, foundation funding, and donations. Additionally, hundreds of volunteers assist with carrying out the Department's mission.

In 2019 the Department continued to promote racial equity work within its divisions. A Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Coordinator was hired to coordinate the work of the Human Rights Commission, Disability Commission, and Rainbow Commission as well as coordinate the work of the Town related to racial equity.

## BOARD OF HEALTH

The mission of the Arlington Board of Health is to protect the public health of the Town of Arlington through enforcement of health codes and regulations while promoting a healthy community. The Board of Health is a statutory board comprised of three community members at large, one of which must be a physician, appointed by the Town Manager for three year terms. The Board holds public meetings and conducts public hearings as necessary for health code violations. Additionally, the Board adopts Regulations that provide protections beyond the minimum standards outlined in Massachusetts General Laws (M.G.L.) and State Sanitary Code (codified in the Code of Massachusetts Regulations, C.M.R.) and sets town-wide policy related to important health

issues. In 2019 the Board met seven times to conduct hearings and discuss the following topics:

- Keeping-of-hens permit applications
- Housing code violations
- Food code violations
- Food code variance requests
- Body art variance request
- Regulations restricting the sale of Cannabidiol
- Amendments to the Regulations Restricting the Sale of Medical Marijuana
- Amendments to the Regulations Restricting the Sale of Tobacco and Nicotine Delivery Product



## HEALTH DEPARTMENT

The Health Department is located at 27 Maple Street in the Arlington Senior Center. The Department handles the day-to-day procedural operations and administrative duties associated with the Board of Health. The Department is required by State statutes and regulations to perform many 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 and public health nursing staff within the Health Department. The Department is comprised of a Public Health Director, two Health Compliance Officers, one Administrative Assistant (which is shared with Human Services), a part-time Public Health Nurse, a part-time Sealer of Weights and Measures, and a Public Health Associate.

### 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, as well as noise and odor concerns. In 2019 the environmental health division was comprised of two full-time inspectors and hosted two public health associates from Northeastern University. The Depart-

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ment also contracts with two food safety consultants to conduct a portion of mandated food establishment inspections.

## Environmental Health Highlights

- Staff investigated eight food complaints.
- Fifteen new food establishments opened or changed ownership and fifteen establishments closed.
- Staff conducted 138 housing inspections and collaborated with the Attorney General's Abandoned Housing Initiative Program on six properties.
- The Hoarding response team received eleven referrals and identified four new hoarding cases, while conducting follow-up on seven ongoing cases.

| Permits Issued         | 2016       | 2017       | 2018       | 2019       |
|------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Food                   | 341        | 349        | 324        | 368        |
| Tobacco                | 19         | 19         | 19         | 19         |
| Waste Hauler           | 18         | 19         | 20         | 21         |
| Funeral Director       | 8          | 7          | 7          | 7          |
| Tanning Establishment  | 1          | 1          | 1          | 1          |
| Public Pool            | 8          | 8          | 8          | 8          |
| Public Beach           | 3          | 3          | 3          | 3          |
| Ice Rink               | 1          | 1          | 1          | 1          |
| Keeping of Hens        | 13         | 12         | 13         | 14         |
| Camps                  | 6          | 6          | 6          | 6          |
| Body Art Establishment | 1          | 1          | 1          | 1          |
| Body Art Practitioner  | 2          | 2          | 2          | 2          |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>421</b> | <b>428</b> | <b>405</b> | <b>448</b> |

| Inspection Type                            | 2016         | 2017         | 2018         | 2019         |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Food Establishment & Temporary Food Event* | 490          | 459          | 503          | 484          |
| Tobacco Compliance Check                   | 38           | 38           | 12           | 20           |
| Housing                                    | 185          | 160          | 172          | 138          |
| Demolition Inspection                      | 18           | 26           | 21           | 16           |
| Nuisance Inspection                        | 609          | 417          | 405          | 408          |
| Keeping of Hens                            | 19           | 11           | 3            | 10           |
| Bodywork Establishment                     | 4            | 0            | 3            | 0            |
| <b>Total</b>                               | <b>1,363</b> | <b>1,105</b> | <b>1,119</b> | <b>1,076</b> |

\*Temporary food event inspections include: Farmer's Market, Feast of the East, Town Day, and other various public health events.

| Type of Food Permits Issued | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|-----------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Food Establishment Permits  | 183  | 193  | 191  | 193  |
| Mobile Food Permits         | 2    | 3    | 1    | 3    |
| Residential Kitchen Permits | 11   | 11   | 12   | 11   |
| Farmers Market Permits      | 11   | 13   | 9    | 12   |
| Temporary Event Food Permit | 134  | 126  | 132  | 149  |

## Public Health Nursing

The primary responsibility of the Public Health Nurse is to prevent the spread of disease in our community. The roles and responsibilities of this position include communicable disease surveillance and investigation, as well as, health promotion, education, and emergency preparedness planning.

## Health Promotion

Each year the Health Department plans and holds flu vaccination clinics for our residents. In 2019 the Department partnered with the Council on Aging, Arlington Housing Authority, Arlington Public Schools, and the Fire Department to hold over twenty clinics throughout the community. Clinic locations included public schools, public housing buildings, and the Senior Center. This year we relied on over twenty Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteers to help run our clinics. As a result we were able to vaccinate over 1,600 residents. In addition to immunizations, our Public Health Nurse participated in the Town Wellness Committee, the Massachusetts Association for Public Health Nurses, various emergency preparedness exercises and drills, and management of the Medical Reserve Corp.



Public health official administering flu vaccine.

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## Communicable Disease Surveillance

Below is a list of communicable diseases that have been investigated and monitored by the public health nurse over the years.

| Communicable Disease   | 2016       | 2017       | 2018       | 2019       |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Babesiosis   | 1          | 3          | --         | 3          |
| Calcirovirus/norovirus   | 1          | 2          | --         | 3          |
| Campylobacter Enteritis  | 6          | 8          | 10         | 9          |
| Cryptosporidiosis  | --         | 1          | 2          | 2          |
| Cyclosporiasis   | --         | --         | --         | 4          |
| Dengue Fever   | --         | --         | --         | 1          |
| Giardia  | 5          | 2          | 5          | 4          |
| Group A strep  | 3          | --         | 2          | 2          |
| Group B Strep  | --         | 1          | 1          | 2          |
| Haemophilus influenza  | 1          | --         | --         | 1          |
| Hepatitis A  | --         | 2          | 1          | 2          |
| Hepatitis B  | 12         | 13         | 18         | 9          |
| Hepatitis C  | 10         | 20         | 12         | 10         |
| Hepatitis D  | --         | --         | --         | 1          |
| Hepatitis E  | --         | 1          | --         | --         |
| Human Granulocytic Anaplasmosis  | 3          | 4          | 2          | 2          |
| Influenza  | 79         | 104        | 170        | 130        |
| Invasive Bacterial Infection   | --         | --         | 1          | --         |
| Legionellosis  | 1          | 1          | 2          | 1          |
| Lyme Disease   | 45         | 37         | 52         | 45         |
| Malaria  | 1          | 1          | 1          | 1          |
| Mumps  | 1          | 2          | --         | --         |
| Pertussis  | 1          | 3          | 1          | --         |
| Q fever  | --         | 1          | --         | --         |
| Salmonella   | 6          | 9          | 7          | 2          |
| Shigatoxin   | 3          | 1          | 1          | 1          |
| Shigellosis  | --         | --         | 1          | 1          |
| Strep pneumonia -invasive  | 3          | 3          | 3          | 3          |
| Tickborne  | --         | 1          | --         | 4          |
| Tuberculosis <i>contact, and suspected cases in addition to probable and confirmed cases</i> | 36         | 40         | 42         | 64         |
| Varicella  | 2          | 7          | 4          | 3          |
| Vibrio   | --         | 1          | --         | --         |
| West Nile Virus  | 3          | --         | --         | --         |
| Yersiniosis  | 2          | --         | --         | 1          |
| Zika   | --         | 1          | --         | --         |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>225</b> | <b>269</b> | <b>338</b> | <b>311</b> |

-- Denotes disease not tracked/present in those years

## Emergency Preparedness

In 2018 the Health Department became the host agency for the 4B Medical Reserve Corps (MRC), now known as the Metro East MRC. The Metro East MRC is one of the four federally recognized MRC's in the region and consists of 18 communities, including Arlington. The MRC is comprised of local health professionals and non-medical laypersons that contribute their skills and expertise during times of public health emergency and non-emergency community events. They assist existing community emergency medical response systems, as well as provide a group of readily trained and available resources to help a community deal with pressing public health needs and improvements.

In 2019 the Metro East MRC welcomed over 140 new volunteers to the unit and provided numerous outreach and training opportunities throughout the region. These include multiple recruitment events, Stop the Bleed, Stop the Bleed - Train the Trainer, Pet First Aid, and a regional MRC Conference, which included presentations on the 2018 Merrimack Valley Gas Explosions, Services Animals and Pets in Disaster Response, and Emergency Risk Communication.

## 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, taxi cabs, 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.

Below is a table of devices that were sealed in Arlington for 2019:

| Device Sealed                            | Arlington  |
|--|------------|
| Scales 10 lbs and under                  | 9          |
| Scales 100lbs and under                  | 89         |
| Gasoline pump meters                     | 117        |
| Vehicle tank meters (heating oil trucks) | 33         |
| Taxi Cab Meters                          | 10         |
| Bulk heating oil tank meters             | 3          |
| Bottle and can return dispensers         | 2          |
| Individual Weights                       | 0          |
| Other devices                            | 2          |
| <b>Total</b>                             | <b>265</b> |

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## COUNCIL ON AGING

The Council on Aging, a division of the Department of Health and Human Services, is a community based social services organization that supports residents age 60 and over in Arlington. The agency's primary responsibilities are to provide information and referral, develop health and wellness programs, provide a sense of well-being through social programs, and promote volunteering and civic engagement.

In 2019 the Department worked with Architect Bill Sterling and his team to capture the needs of Arlington's older population in order to guide the design of the new Community Center which will undergo renovations in the spring of 2020. The new center will include more space for community programming, a café, a full kitchen for meals to be provided, a billiard room, exercise studio, arts and crafts room as well as multiple meeting spaces. The Department kicked off a capital fundraising campaign to raise funds to support the furniture and equipment purchases that will be made once the building renovation is complete. Once renovations are complete, the new space will be officially named the Arlington Community Center. The space will remain a center for Arlington's older population but with a redesign and a new name, the goal will be to draw a more diverse cross section of Arlington's older residents.



*Design depicts ground floor of newly designed Community Center to be improved in 2020.*

### 2019 Highlights

#### Social Work

There were two full-time social workers at the Council on Aging and two social work interns for the year.

- 950 individuals 60 and older received one-on-one direct social work services for a total

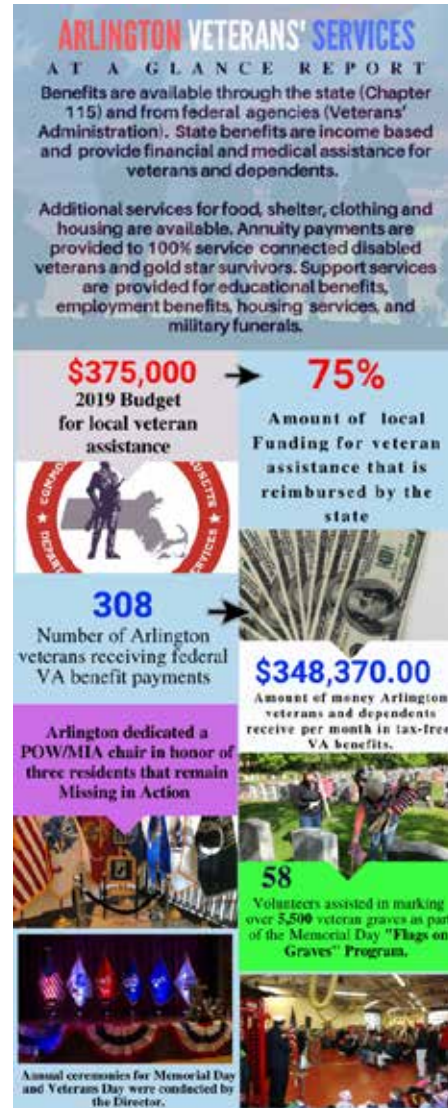
- of 3710 cumulative contacts via home visits, office appointments or phone consultation.
- 75 individuals served through support groups that include: bereavement, low vision, caregiver, grandparents raising grandchildren and decluttering support groups.
- 260 medical equipment items loaned to 140 individuals
- Hosted on-going intergenerational programming with elementary through high school aged youth.
- Hosted LGBTQ+ events twice per month at the Senior Center and partnered with the Robbins Library to host a bimonthly LGBTQ+ intergenerational movie series.
- Continued as SNAP outreach provider, enrolling 60 households in the program.
- Information and Programming
- Provided organic, local, fresh produce to 70 individuals for 20 weeks through our Lahey Farm Share program.
- Organized and implemented the annual Arlington for All Ages 5K Road Race with 362 runners and 58 volunteers, raising funds for the Capital Campaign to furnish the renovated Arlington Community Center.
- Implemented tax relief work-off programs for 20 homeowners, 5 renters and 5 veterans who each were placed within Town departments and completed 136 volunteer hours each.
- Age Friendly kick-off was held at Senior Center, residents learned about program, completed surveys. Over the course of several months over 600 surveys were completed, multiple focus groups held and data was analyzed to provide context for working group to select areas to focus future efforts on.
- AARP income tax support provided direct support to over 300 residents to assist with filing income tax paperwork.
- Fire safety program organized through American Red Cross and Arlington Fire Department.
- Leaf and snow removal programs supported 75 seniors in 2019.
- Annual celebrations held at the Senior Center include Diwali Celebration, holiday luncheons, Chinese New Year, Older Americans Month celebration, and National Senior Center month celebration.

#### Transportation

- Launched pilot programs expanding the van service to Burlington Mall, Market Basket, and Target.

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- Offered 3-months of free van rides within Arlington to all age 60+ residents who live at each low income senior housing property in town, thanks to an \$11,000 grant from Lahey. This complementary van service grew ridership from the addresses it served by 20% and encouraged new riders to try the van service.
- Added one full day and two half days of van service to the schedule by hiring a 5th part-time van driver, allowing the Department to schedule, on average, 30 more van rides per week.
- Launched ride share options using Uber Central for age 60+ Arlington residents to medical appointments, even for riders who do not have a cell phone.
- Encouraged independent use of ride sharing apps such as Uber and Lyft through training and education, including hosting a hands-on seminar put on by TRIPPS (a local organization helping older adults learn how to use and manipulate the rideshare apps of Uber & Lyft).
- Completed 12 week pilot for van transportation to winter "Walk the Mall" program, providing round trip rides for exercise, socialization, shopping and blood pressure checks at the Burlington Mall weekly from January - March.
- Launched weekly pilot for van transportation to Market Basket for grocery shopping in addition to local Arlington stores.
- Launched weekly pilot for van transportation to Target for riders to complete holiday shopping during the month of December.



## ARLINGTON VETERANS SERVICES

Benefits are available through Massachusetts General Law Chapter 115 and from federal agencies including the Veterans' Administration to support veterans and their dependents in Arlington. State benefits are income based and provide financial and medical assistance. Additional services for food, shelter, clothing and housing are available. Annuity payments are provided to 100% service connected disabled veterans and gold star survivors. Support services are provided for educational benefits, employment benefits, housing services and military funerals.

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| \$375,000     | 2019 Budget for local veteran assistance   |
| 75%           | Amount of local funding for veteran assistance that is reimbursed by the state                 |
| 308           | Number of Arlington veterans receiving federal VA benefits                                     |
| \$348,370     | Monthly payment amount to Arlington veterans and dependents from the VA                        |
| 58 Volunteers | Helped to mark over 5,900 veterans graves as part of the Memorial Day Flags on Graves Program. |

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## ARLINGTON YOUTH COUNSELING CENTER

The Arlington Youth Counseling Center (AYCC), a division of Arlington Health and Human Services, is a community-based and DPH-licensed mental health center serving Arlington youth (ages 3-21) and their families. AYCC is the leading provider of outpatient and school based child and adolescent mental health services in Arlington. AYCC is also one of the only providers in the area that accepts youth with public health insurance, and is committed to ensuring that all community youth and families have access to necessary mental health services, regardless of their ability to pay. In addition to mental health services, AYCC oversees First Step- a support group for victims and survivors of domestic violence, and offers community resource supports and case management services to Arlington residents (under the age of 60) experiencing basic life needs.

The following list captures some of AYCC's highlights from 2019:

- Provided outpatient and school-based mental health services to over 350 children, teens, and adult caregivers, including 143 new clients in 2019. Conducted a total of 6,580 sessions (including psychotherapy, psychiatric evaluation, and medication treatment).
- Provided ongoing, school-based counseling to 77 students in Arlington Public Schools through the Project Success program.
- Facilitated therapeutic groups at Ottoson Middle School and the Gibbs School, including Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) groups for students experiencing depression and anxiety, and friendship groups for students in need of developing social skills.
- Provided weekly therapeutic support to students in the Workplace, an alternative program at Arlington High School, and co-lead a Workplace program hiking/camping trip at Mt. Monadnock.



- Provided over \$19,000 in free and reduced fee care to 19 families in need of financial assistance.
- Facilitated weekly therapeutic groups for victims and survivors of domestic violence.
- Provided community resource support to over 70 Arlington residents experiencing a range of issues, including housing instability and homelessness, food insecurity, utility arrears, childcare, and unemployment.
- Created a new Case Manager and Homeless Outreach Worker position to offer resource support to homeless individuals in Arlington, and more intensive case management services to Arlington residents in need.
- Awarded a "100K for 100" grant for a second time from the Cummings Foundation. This 100K grant will help fund the work of AYCC's Psychiatric Clinical Nurse Specialist over the next three years.
- Collaborated with the Board of Youth Services and Arlington Public Schools to offer two community forums focused on mental health: "Understanding Teen Depression," a presentation by Families for Depression Awareness, and "Adolescent Wellness: Understanding and Responding to Depression and Suicide Risks," featuring guest presenter Dr. Larry Berkowitz.
- Renovated AYCC's therapy playrooms, with support from a local therapeutic interior designer, to create a more welcoming, organized, and therapeutic environment for clients of all ages.
- Raised over \$47,000 at AYCC's 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Gala. This year we had the great pleasure of honoring beloved Board of Youth Services member, Carlene Newell. Carlene has been a fierce advocate for AYCC and youth mental health services and a champion for youth in the community for over thirty years.



## ARLINGTON YOUTH HEALTH & SAFETY COALITION

Arlington Youth Health & Safety Coalition (AYHSC) community-based coalition with a mission 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.

2019 was the concluding year of the ten-year federal Drug Free Communities Program (DFC) grant. As AYHSC faced the end of DFC funding, there was a focus on sustainability, increased community engagement and raising awareness about our mission and community contributions. AYHSC received additional grant funding from the Sanborn Foundation, Communities Talk Events, SAMSHA and MA Department of Public Health's Bureau of Substance Abuse Services.

The Coalition was asked for expertise and to provide data to:

- The Attorney General and District Attorney's office
- School Administration
- Parents
- Community Members
- Youth
- The Robbins Library
- Neighboring Communities
- TV and Print Media

### Summary of Accomplishments

During 2019, the coalition documented 785 accomplishments/outputs addressing a broad range of issues. Most of the Coalition's activities addressed general ATOD (Alcohol, Tobacco and Other drugs), followed by youth vaping and mental health.

The Coalition accomplished these community changes in 2019:

- New practice of distributing self-care resource documents to students after the

YRBS.

- Conducted first environmental scan of alcohol littering.
- First-time students participated in Kick Butts Day where they went to Boston to march and met with state legislators focusing on tobacco and marijuana.
- Conducted outreach to retailers with youth about reducing access to vape materials.
- Students at risk are presented with a diversion opportunity.
- Implementation of the photo-voice research project.
- New partnership with pediatricians to use the SCOPE of Pain curricula to help them safely prescribe opioids.
- New resource website created by the Parent Advisory for Parents.
- Implementation of a new parent survey.

## COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

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 illness, and other disabilities have equal access to Town facilities, services, and programs. 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.

The following are Commission on Disability activities that took place during 2019:

- The Commission co-sponsored the Diversity Career Fair at Arlington Town Hall. Employers from health care, government, financial, retail, and non-profit organizations participated in the career fair.
- The Commission continued to meet with Town Officials to discuss the rights of people with disabilities in order to work towards full community inclusion with in the Town of Arlington.
- The Commission advocated for, and received, an increased budget. The funds were used to implement one strategy from the self-evaluation and transition plan, improve website accessibility, conduct educational

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outreach, and improve accessibility at the Commission meeting space.

- Long time ADA Coordinator, Jack Jones retired from the Town after over forty years of service.

The following are Commission on Disability goals for 2020 that will continue to revolve around the very clear parameters of the Americans with Disability Act.

- The Commission will continue to advocate for and ensure the rights of Arlington residents living with disabilities.
- The Commission plans to co-sponsor the annual Diversity Career Fair in partnership with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission.
- The Commission will continue to advocate for safer sidewalk surfaces and for full curb cut ramp compliance.
- The Commission plans to designate members of the Commission to meet with other Town Commissions / Town Committees for the purpose of sharing information.
- The Commission plans to work with the Town's Business Community for the purpose of improving access.
- The Commission plans to collaborate with the Council on Aging regarding an age friendly community's initiative.
- The Commission will be actively involved with a Town sponsored accessibility evaluation and transition plan.
- The Commission will work with the Town to implement the strategies listed in the self-evaluation and transition plan.

The Commission meets on the third Wednesday of each month at 4:00 p.m. in the Health and Human Services conference room located at 27 Maple Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, in the Arlington Senior Center. Meetings are open to the public. All interested residents are encouraged to attend to either observe or voice their opinion.



## 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 our 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 thirteen members of the Commission.

The AHRC met monthly throughout the year. New co-chairs, Sharon Grossman and Kristen Bauer, were elected in August 2019.

The AHRC collaborated with, co-sponsored events with or publicized events for many Town government and community groups, including: Arlington Public Schools (APS), Arlington Health and Human Services (AHHS), Arlington Police Department (APD), ACMi, True Story Theater, Mystic LGBTQ+ Youth Support Network, Communities for Restorative Justice (C4RJ),, Arlington Rainbow Commission, Anti-Defamation League of New England, and human rights organizations in several neighboring towns, Diversity Inclusion Groups through the APS, and the MLK Birthday Celebration Committee.

### Education and Trainings

- Training of Commission members related to Open Meeting Laws, Town By-laws conducted by Arlington Town Counsel
- Held a retreat for AHRC Commissioners to address issues including continuing to develop consistency and protocols related to investigation of increasing response and communication, team building, and develop working groups to maximize the Commission's impact.

### Community Outreach

- Continued to offer a citizen's forum at the beginning of each monthly meeting to give residents the opportunity to address the Commission on matters relating to equality and fairness. This year, at least several dozen citizens took advantage of this opportunity. Citizens attended the Commission's 12 meetings.
- Began a new monthly agenda item to enable Commissioners to discuss issues raised by community members at the previous month's meeting.
- Instituted a new monthly Commissioners' Coffee Chat to enable members of the community to informally meet and share ideas on human rights issues with two Commissioners each month.
- Regularly attended and participated in



Massachusetts Association of Human Rights Commission (MAHRC) meetings and ADL's Northeast Regional Advisory Committee.

- Continued co-sponsorship of the Town's Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration.
- Hosted the second Double Take event in Town Hall in February. Over 100 people attended, while others viewed it on ACMi.
- Hosted popular booths at Town Day and Feast of the East. Distributed approximately 360 more Hate Has No Home Here (HHN-HH) lawn signs, window signs and car magnets in English, Urdu, Korean, Hebrew, Arabic, and Spanish. Distributed signs along Lake Street to households that were willing to accept them after the arson fires at the Center for Jewish Life of Arlington/Belmont. Added Love Lives Here lawn and window signs to the original HHNHH signs for distribution.
- Supported a gathering in response to hate graffiti at Magnolia Park in April.
- Cosponsored two workshops on Courageous Conversations in elementary schools for parents/guardians in April about race.
- Cosponsored a parent program with True Story Theatre in April to share stories related to diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Organized a community gathering at Town Hall in May in response to suspicious fires at the Center for Jewish Life of Arlington/Belmont and the home of Rabbi Avi Bukiet and his family; over 500 people attended.
- Crafted and released public statements in response to incidents.
- Co-sponsored a gathering in Lexington in response to the Christchurch Mosque shootings.
- Sent several e-correspondence via MailChimp to our list of over 400 subscribers.
- Posted 70 times on Facebook, reaching about 39,000 people.
- Continued sending an AHRC commissioner to the regular meetings of the Superintendent's Diversity Advisory Committee.
- Clarified and agreed to a liaison program between the AHRC and APS.
- Continued to send an AHRC commissioner to serve on the Town's Surveillance Study Committee.
- Began working with two Arlington High School students who are serving as Interns.
- Co-sponsored and financially supported events with the APS DIGs (Diversity and Inclusion Groups that are connected to each school and led by parents/guardians)

## Incidents and Complaint Response

- Hate incidents continued, with increasing complaints of tagging/graffiti of hate messages and other forms of hate speech in schools.
- Collected information regarding hate incidents occurring in Arlington from citizens, schools, and the APD, as follows: 21 Cases, 11 of which involved the APS and 16 of which were also referred from or handled by the APD.
- Continued to work closely 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.
- Completed a Memorandum of Agreement that included the APS, AHRC, and APD through a collaborative process that set forward Guidelines for Responding to Hate Incidents in the Arlington Public Schools

AHRC Year and Goals Moving Forward Our Commission of 13 has 6 new members, increasingly reflecting the growing diversity of our town. Our entire Commission is energized to work together with the community to address the challenging human rights issues facing those who live, work and visit Arlington.

As we move forward, we are mindful of the damage to our community that has yet to be repaired. Regrettably, our town has experienced incidents of hate, intolerance, and inflammatory language, stemming from racism, anti-Semitism, anti-immigrant sentiment, and systemic discrimination. Homophobic, anti-Semitic, and racist graffiti has been scrawled in our schools. A house of worship and home of a Rabbi and his family was set on fire twice. Hate speech targeting communities of color, immigrants and refugees, religious minorities and other vulnerable communities has been circulated and heard. Hateful incidents like these have caused widespread fear. Arlington can and must do better.

We recognize that every person in Arlington deserves to be valued, respected, and protected. Thus, we are increasing opportunities to be heard. We are hosting, sponsoring, and partnering with community programs and events to welcome and celebrate diversity. We are participating in town programs, including community activities, discussions with police, and outreach to community groups to foster respect. We are facilitating training, education and incident reporting with the police, the town, and our schools to increase protection for all in Arlington.

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## LGBTQIA+ RAINBOW COMMISSION

Established by Town Meeting in 2017, the LGBTQIA+ Rainbow Commission is a volunteer group of Arlington residents, appointed by the Town government, who promote the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ individuals and groups through affirming policies and programs, resources, advocacy, and community-building with the vision that the Town of Arlington will fully include the LGBTQIA+ community in all aspects of Town life.

During 2019 the Commission focused efforts in these main areas:

### *Community-engagement events hosted by the Rainbow Commission*

- 3rd Annual Arlington Pride Picnic – Hosted 80+ at the Arlington Senior Center with opportunity to meet new and old friends and enjoy picnic, balloon-twisting, crafts and outreach about Rainbow Commission itself.
- Porchfest – welcomed 35 + people to our karaoke porch at the Arlington Senior Center.
- Town Day – Welcomed nearly 100 people to Commission booth and distributed rainbow flags, pronoun buttons and other items while building our contact list and educating the community about our work.
- Community Conversation – Hosted a discussion of LGBTQIA+ issues and efforts in Arlington Public Schools with participation from 20 interested parties including the Superintendent, School Committee members, teachers, school nurses, parents and other community members.
- Crafts & Community and Cookies & Community – Created opportunities for youth and adults to meet and build community, and helped them create their own pronoun buttons.

### *Community events cosponsored by the Rainbow Commission*

- Parent Forum: Building Community to Support LGBTQIA+ Youth – Arlington Public Schools and LexPride
- Intergenerational SAGE Table – Council on Aging
- Transgender Day of Remembrance – LexPride
- ABCs of LGBTQIA+ Aging: Planning for the Future – Council on Aging
- Inclusion Day – Arlington High School
- Queer Book Group (monthly) – Robbins Library
- Reel Queer films (bimonthly) – Council on Aging and Robbins Library.



*Porchfest karaoke*

- Collaborations with Town Government and staff.
- Worked with Town Manager and Health and Human Services to implement changes that earned a Municipal Equality Index Score of 100 for Arlington for the first time.
- Engaged in dialogue with AHS Principal about the inclusion of gender-neutral spaces in proposed plans for the new high school.
- With safety assistance from the Police Department, painted rainbow and trans flags in the crosswalk in front of Town Hall for Pride Month.
- Created a display at Robbins Library for Pride Month.
- Recruited liaisons from Council on Aging, Robbins Library, Ottoson QSA, AHS QSA, Police Department, and LexPride to occasionally attend our meetings to expand the reach of and inform Rainbow Commission work.
- Attended meetings of the Diversity Task Group, Human Rights Commission, LexPride, and the Select Board.



*Coming Out Day pronoun-button-making*

### **Advocacy and Social Justice**

- Participated in final Restorative Justice Circle for high school youth who spray-painted homophobic graffiti on Arlington High School.
- Participated in the interview process for the Town's new Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Coordinator.
- Participated in Reclaiming Our Park, a community gathering in response to white supremacist graffiti at Magnolia Park.
- Helped draft the annual Pride Proclamation from the Select Board.

## Communications

- Maintained Facebook page (275 followers), Twitter (170 followers), email list (195 contacts) and website (2,400 views, 1,350 visitors) to update the community on Commission activities, other area events and issues of interest or importance to the LGBTQIA+ community.
- Responded to countless emails from individuals seeking resources and advice regarding LGBTQIA+ issues.
- Hosted 44 guests at Commission and subcommittee meetings.
- Posted about events, engaged in community discussions, and shared resources in various Arlington Facebook groups.

The Commission secured \$1,500 in grant money from the Boston Pride Community Fund to support Pride events in June and three subsequent community-building events. The grant was needed to fund events held prior to our first year of Town funding, which started this July.

The Commission generally meets on the third Thursday of the month at 6:30 p.m. in the Robbins Library's 4th floor conference room. All meetings are open to the public and we encourage community members and representatives from other Town committees and commissions to attend. For more information, see [rainbowarlington.org](http://rainbowarlington.org) or email [rainbow@town.arlington.ma.us](mailto:rainbow@town.arlington.ma.us).