

# ***Welcome to the Arlington Housing Plan Meeting-in-a Box!***

Thank you for agreeing to host a community conversation for your friends and neighbors! This kit includes the basic materials you need to conduct your meeting and provide feedback to the Town. You should find the following items in the packet. If something is missing, please contact Erin Moriarty, Assistant Director of Planning and Community Development, EMoriarty@town.arlington.ma.us.



***Instructions for you, the host:***

- Process Overview
- Sample Meeting Agenda
- Sample Invitation

***Materials for you to distribute at the meeting:***

	Title	Number of Pages
Sheet A	Sign-in Sheet for Facilitators/Note Takers	1
Sheet B	Sign-in Sheet for Participants	1
Sheet C	Meeting Agenda	1
Sheet D	Arlington Housing Plan: One-Page Overview	1
Sheet E	My Ideas (participant worksheets)	2 double-sided sheets per question

Remember to bring enough copies of each sheet for your participants!

***Additional items you will need:***

- Pens/pencils
- Flip chart (or other paper for taking notes), markers, and tape
- Return envelope

# ***Instructions for Meeting Host***

## ***Process Overview***

### **1. Invite**

- Identify people or groups that you want to invite to your Meeting in a Box. (Plan on one facilitator for every 8-12 people in a small-group discussion).
- Send the meeting invitation via e-mail or mail or call invitees.

### **2. Remind**

- Call and/or e-mail the people you invited 1-2 days before the scheduled meeting.

### **3. Set up**

- Select a location where all participants can comfortably sit, ideally in a circle.
- Sort copies of meeting materials into sets for participants.
- Have enough pens/pencils available.

### **4. Maintain Sign-in Sheets**

- Make sure facilitators and note-takers sign in on Sheet A
- And, ask attendees to sign in on Sheet B. There is space on Sheet B to ask to be added to a list for future information about the Arlington Housing Plan.

### **5. Facilitate**

- Lead a small-group discussion, making sure the meeting stays on topic and all discussion questions are answered.

### **6. Return**


- Collect all materials, including the individual worksheets and feedback sheets from each participant, and make sure each sheet is labeled with the meeting code (see details under "Host Instructions").
- Package them together and return the response packet to the address provided on the return information sheet. Please recycle any unused materials.

## ***Group Logistics***

These meetings are designed to encourage conversation. The host is responsible for coordinating all aspects of the meeting. If you host a large meeting, we suggest that you break into groups of 8-12 people and ask for a facilitator and note-taker for each group. The facilitator (who could also be the host) is responsible for keeping the conversation focused and ensuring everyone has a chance to speak. The note-taker takes notes throughout the discussion. If you do break into groups, please name/number the groups and indicate this on the discussion notes.

### **Meeting Agenda**

The agenda and instructions below are guidelines for you as facilitator.

 Hand out **Sheet C.**

#### **WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS (10 - 15 minutes)**

##### **Who's in the room?**

Take a few minutes at the beginning of the meeting for introductions. Ask people to tell something about themselves in addition to their name (e.g., their neighborhood, any affiliations, their interest in the Arlington Housing Plan, etc.) so that everyone gets a better sense of who is participating and why. No need to spend too much time on this activity.

##### **What is the Arlington Housing Plan?**

Briefly review the Arlington Housing Plan one-page overview.

 Hand out **Sheet D.**

##### **Meeting overview**

Briefly review the information on the meeting agenda.

##### **Explain the meeting's purpose**

- To increase participation in identifying housing needs in Arlington.
- To identify barriers to fair housing and equity in Arlington.
- To identify opportunities for Arlington to address the town's housing needs.
- To include as many voices as possible in the Arlington Housing Plan process.

##### **Explain how input from this meeting will be used**


The Arlington Department of Planning and Community Development and Housing Plan Implementation Committee will use public input to explain housing needs, barriers, and opportunities in the Arlington Housing Plan.

##### **Explain Group Discussion Guidelines**

- Review the suggested discussion guidelines or ask the group to brainstorm guidelines that will help everyone to participate. Ask if anyone has any questions and if everyone agrees to the discussion guidelines. Clarify as needed and address any concerns. Ask if the group needs anything else to help stay focused and have an effective meeting.
- Suggested discussion guidelines:
  - Everyone should have an equal opportunity to talk and be heard.
  - Keep the conversation on topic.
  - Listen to others and avoid criticizing.
  - Respect limited time and keep your answers to the point.
- Be honest and try to understand other viewpoints.
- It's ok to disagree.
- Try not to interrupt the facilitator or other group members.
- Cell phones on silent.

### *Discussion Questions*

**Discussion Questions** (total of 60 minutes, about 20 minutes per question). The questions should occupy most of the meeting time.

 Hand out **Sheet E**.

#### **Question 1: Housing Needs (Read the question)**

Arlington residents have expressed concerns about the housing needs of older adults. Other needs identified so far are the cost and condition of rental housing, the impact of Arlington's housing sale prices on the ability of young families to find a home in Arlington they can afford, and the impact of limited housing choices on racial and ethnic diversity in Arlington. What housing needs are you most concerned about?

#### **Discuss**

1. Read the question out loud and ask if anyone has questions about the question.
2. Give participants a couple of minutes to think about and list answers on their worksheet for the corresponding questions before beginning to go around the group for answers. Participants may fill out the worksheet as individuals or in pairs, whichever they prefer.
3. Ask for a volunteer to start the go-around. Ask for one or two thoughts per person. Then go around the group from that person. It's ok to pass if a person is not ready when it's their turn. Once you get around the circle, be sure to go back to anyone who didn't speak yet. After everyone has spoken, go back to anyone who has an additional thought that didn't come up.
4. During this time, the note-taker should write down each of the thoughts, ideally on a flip chart or large piece of paper taped to the wall so everyone can see. Alternatively, the note-taker can use a marker to write each thought in large print on a piece of notebook paper, confirming with the group that the thought has been correctly captured. Ask the note-taker to use participants' words rather than edit or change them.
5. You – the host – are also a participant and you can share your opinions as an equal member of the discussion, but make sure everyone has a chance to express his/her opinion.
6. After everyone has had a chance to speak, briefly review all thoughts the group generated. Then, ask the participants to write on their worksheet three thoughts that are most important to them as individuals from among all the thoughts generated during the discussion. Remind them that they can pick thoughts they initially offered or those that other people offered.

**NOTE:** This is not an attempt to build a group agreement on the top ideas. There is no need to try to get the group to agree.

**Question 2: Challenges to Meeting Affordable Housing Needs (Read the Question)**

Participants in interviews conducted for the Housing Plan and at the June 9 Housing Plan Meeting were asked about challenges or obstacles to providing affordable housing in Arlington. Several challenges were identified, such as difficulty finding locations that for new housing development or redevelopment, how the Town's Housing Trust Fund and CPA funds should be used to meet housing needs, and general tensions and disagreement about growth in Arlington that make it hard for people to agree. What challenges do you think are the biggest impediments to meeting housing needs in Arlington?

Repeat the above process for the second discussion question.


**Question 3: Opportunities for Reaching Agreement.**

What steps would help to bring Arlington residents together about providing affordable housing? How can the Town balance concerns about housing needs and natural resources protection? Or concerns about housing need and preserving Arlington's built environment? What do you think most could people agree on?

Repeat the above process for the third discussion question.

**Wrap-Up (15 minutes)**

If you have divided participants into small groups, reconvene the larger group. See if there are any issues or concerns that seemed to be mentioned by many participants in the meeting. Ask participants to fill out the individual feedback sheets.

 Hand out **Sheet F**.

***Final Steps***

**Collect and sort the meeting materials.**

After the meeting, package up the materials for return. Sort the materials into sets, keeping like items together:

- Sign-in sheets (**Sheets A and B**)
- Group discussion materials (if you had more than one group, keep each group's materials together):
- Group discussion notes
- Participant worksheets (**Sheet E**)

**Label the meeting materials**

Assign a code to your meeting following the instructions below. **Enter this code into the appropriate boxes on all the materials that you will need to return to the Town.**

Information for Meeting Host  
ARLINGTON HOUSING PLAN

FIRST THREE SPACES: Your initials

NEXT FOUR SPACES: Month and day of your event (e.g., "0418" for April 18th)

The code box is always located at the top of the page and it looks like this:

Code:
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**Write up a summary of the meeting notes**

The summary can be bullet points listing the main ideas participants. If possible, try to group the ideas by type or theme. Provide highlights of the meeting.

**Return the meeting materials within seven (7) days**

Please mail, scan and e-mail, or hand deliver all participant and group response materials to:

Erin Moriarty, Assistant Director  
Arlington Department of Planning and Community Development  
730 Mass. Ave Annex  
Arlington MA 02476

***THANK YOU!***

CODE:

***SHEET A. Facilitator and Notetaker Sign-in Sheet***

Role	Group	Name	E-mail and/or Phone (in case clarifications are needed)
Facilitator			
Note-taker			
Facilitator			
Note-taker			

CODE:

***SHEET B. Participants Sign-in Sheet***

Meeting Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Participants: \_\_\_\_\_

Name	E-mail and/or Phone	Would you like to receive e-mail updates about the Arlington Housing Plan?
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No



**SHEET C**

# ***Arlington Housing Plan***

## **Participant Meeting Agenda & Information**

### ***Part One: Welcome and Introductions***

- Who's in the room?
- What is the Arlington Housing Plan?
- Meeting overview
- Meeting purpose
  - To encourage small group conversations about Arlington today and Arlington' housing future
  - To identify the Arlington's affordable housing and fair housing needs
  - To identify the barriers or obstacles that make it hard for Arlington to provide affordable housing and to be the diverse, equitable place many residents say they want the Town to be
  - To find common ground, if possible, about actions the Town could take to provide affordable housing

### ***Part Two: Discussion Questions***

### ***Part Three: Wrap Up***

#### **Group Discussion Guidelines**

To have a productive conversation where everyone feels welcome to participate, please use these guidelines.

- Everyone should have an equal opportunity to talk and be heard.
- Keep the conversation on topic.
- Listen to others and avoid criticizing.
- Respect limited time and keep your answers to the point.
- Be honest and try to understand other viewpoints.
- It's ok to disagree.
- Try not to interrupt the facilitator or other group members.
- Cell phones on silent, please.

*SHEET D*

## *Arlington Housing Plan*

The Arlington Housing Plan is a five-year plan that will update the Town's 2016 Housing Production Plan. The heart of the Arlington Housing Plan is a **housing needs analysis**, which examines several types of housing needs and problems, such as:



- Affordability and condition of housing
- Accessibility for people with disabilities
- Suitability (e.g., when housing units are either too large or too small for a household's needs)
- Housing discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, age, family size and composition, disability, sources of income, and other characteristics protected by the Federal Fair Housing Act (FFHA) and Massachusetts Anti-Discrimination Law
- Risk of homelessness

The assessment of Arlington's housing needs incorporates data from sources such as the U.S. Census Bureau, housing market reports, municipal records, information about the community's infrastructure, transportation, and zoning, and community interviews. Building on an analysis of the supply and demand of affordable housing and potential barriers to further housing development, the Arlington Housing Plan will set quantitative and qualitative housing production and preservation goals. It will then outline a plan for achieving them through specific recommendations and action steps.

The Arlington Housing Plan could help the Town work toward, achieve, and remain at or above the 10 percent affordable housing minimum under the state's Affordable Housing Law, Chapter 40B. It will require approval by the Select Board and Arlington Redevelopment Board (ARB), and eventually the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). Once approved, the plan will be in effect for five years (2021-2026).

For more information about the Arlington Housing Plan, contact Erin Moriarty, Assistant Director of Planning and Community Development Development, EMoriarty@town.arlington.ma.us, or Judi Barrett, Barrett Planning Group LLC, judi@barrettplanningllc.com.



ARLINGTON HOUSING PLAN "MEETING-IN-A-BOX" WORKSHEETS

Complete AFTER the discussion:

What do I think are Arlington's **top three** housing needs after hearing what others had to say?  
(Note: your answers may be the same answers to wrote down before the meeting.)

1.

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2.

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3.

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ARLINGTON HOUSING PLAN "MEETING-IN-A-BOX" WORKSHEETS

Complete AFTER the discussion:

What do I think are Arlington's **top three** housing challenges or obstacles after hearing what others had to say? (Note: your answers may be the same answers to wrote down before the meeting.)

1.

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2.

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3.

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ARLINGTON HOUSING PLAN "MEETING-IN-A-BOX" WORKSHEETS

Complete AFTER the discussion:

What do I think are Arlington's **top three** opportunities for consensus about affordable housing after hearing what others had to say? (Note: your answers may be the same answers to wrote down before the meeting.)

1.

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2.

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3.

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