

Community Conversations Diversity Equity & Inclusion FAQ

With the launch of the Community Conversations Racism & Reforms Series in 2020, hundreds of questions were submitted by community members seeking additional information regarding topics that were discussed in the sessions, which included: housing, policing, diversity, equity and inclusion efforts, and more. A multi-departmental effort has taken place over the last year to provide as much information, in a digestible form, to inquiries posed. Responses have been grouped into larger summary themed questions that incorporate the frequently asked questions that fell into each category.

Data and Funding

How is the Town using data to improve racial equity practices?

Measuring progress on racial equity and DEI efforts will be challenging, but will also be critical to the success of the effort. As part of the development of a Racial Equity Action Plan, the Town is in the process of identifying existing data and metrics to use as a baseline. These baseline metrics will be measured during the implementation of the plan as it advances. 2020 Census data will also be used when available to help inform policies and programs.

How does the Town budget Diversity, Equity and Inclusion? Police?

The Town of Arlington reviews and approves all budgets, including those for the Police Department and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Division, and adjustments are made accordingly. The budget is voted on at the Annual Town Meeting. Any changes to department funding would be discussed and voted on. Specifically, regarding the Arlington Police Department, it works within the budget that has been voted on by Town Meeting.

Please see the most recent Town Manager's Annual Budget & Financial Plans

[Fiscal Year 2022](#)

[Fiscal Year 2021](#)

[Fiscal Year 2020](#)

Arlington Police Department and Community Policing

What is Town leadership doing to address systemic racism in its police department?

The Town and the Arlington Police Department (APD) have acknowledged the impact and power that systemic racism has on our society. As part of the journey to break down and eliminate systemic racism, Arlington Police officers are participating in the Race, Equity and Leadership (REAL) Training, facilitated by the National League of Cities (NLC), alongside other Town employees. In this training the history of racism is studied, and tools and strategies to combat racial inequity are provided and practiced. Additionally, as a part of police training, the history of policing is studied at

Massachusetts Police Academies through the Municipal Police Training Committee (MPTC). The Chief of Police is committed to fully investigate any incident in which someone feels that they have been racially profiled. The APD has a strict policy against racial profiling. Any officers who violate such policies or who have sustained complaints are held accountable, which may include retraining and attending workshops.

Department policy requires all Arlington police officers to abide by the provisions of the Trust Act, passed by Town Meeting in 2017. The Town strives to provide safety, opportunity, access, and equality for all immigrants and people of all ethnicities and religions, and this is fully supported by the Arlington Police Department. To review the full act, see page 25 of the [2017 Board of Selectmen Report to Town Meeting](#).

Additionally, as part of the efforts to advance positive change within the Department, Arlington Police officers are trained in mindful meditation as part of the health and wellness program within the police department, and offered other resources as well. All officers have completed Mindfulness Training and Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Training.

Does APD have a police code of conduct?

Yes. The Arlington Police Department has policies, procedures, rules and regulations that apply to all APD employees. These policies, procedures, rules and regulations, are constantly reviewed, evaluated, and updated as necessary by the Chief of Police and were developed in conjunction with the [Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission \(MPAC\)](#).

The Arlington Police Department has had, and will continue to have, extensive training in community policing and the Chief of Police welcomes dialogue with community members to address concerns. In its ongoing effort to build trust and transparency, APD invites the community to get to know the Department, interact with its officers, and understand how the local police department operates in the best interest of the community. The Arlington Police Department responds to all calls for service made by members of the community, and the Department has been, and continues to be, a professional, fully accredited, law enforcement agency that strives to meet the needs of the community it serves. In March 2021 the Department earned full accreditation status from the MPAC, for the third time since it was first accredited in 2014. The accreditation process involves rigorous internal self-review, external assessment by MPAC experts, and serves as a means for the Department to compare itself to established best practices nationally and locally.

How many complaints does APD receive on their officers and how would one submit a complaint? How about a commendation?

The Chief of Police is committed to fostering a safe and open environment for the community and for its officers. At this time the Arlington Police Department investigates approximately 5 complaints per year against officers. There is a [reporting system](#) for civilians if they feel they would like to file a complaint, or conversely make a commendation. Additionally, there are means for police officers to report or discuss

incidents towards them from other officers, personnel or town residents, without fear of repercussion or retaliation. The forms may be found at arlingtonma.gov/police.

If there are any inquiries regarding complaints, or other internal affairs records, this information may be obtained and is available through a public records request, <https://www.mass.gov/topics/public-records-requests>.

Who, if anyone, has oversight of any "Reforms" instituted by the APD?

The Chief of Police and the Town Manager have oversight of any reforms instituted by the Arlington Police Department. The newly formed POST (Peace Officer Standards and Training) Commission by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts will likely consider and recommend adoption of policies impacting all police departments in the state. APD has been, and always will be, ready to adapt to the needs of the community, and the Chief of Police fully supports Police Reform that addresses many community concerns. Presently the Chief of Police has instituted several programs within the department that encompass professional development and employee recognition, as the department is committed to working with the community to improve relationships.

What services is the APD currently providing that could be done by unarmed officers or professionals other than the police?

Arlington is recognized as having a long-standing history of incorporating civilians into supporting a multitude of police activities. The APD was among the first in the Commonwealth to utilize a co-response model in which social workers accompany officers on calls. Police officers also hold other partnership roles in other services that are carried out in the town. For example, the Town has a long history and was one of the first communities to conduct homelessness outreach in conjunction with civilian personnel. Due to the dangers inherent with this type of activity, officers assigned to homeless outreach provide protection for civilian personnel at their request. The officers assigned to this role have built strong partnerships with surrounding community policing officers and health care professionals as well as our homeless individuals, so the best resources and services can be provided. Additionally, the Department has long used and is expanding the use of civilians alongside sworn officers to deal with not just homelessness, but also drug cases, domestic violence and more. The Department also utilizes civilian personnel in several areas that include: dispatchers, animal control, records clerk, crime analyst, and clinicians.

Do we have any military gear for our police force?

No. The Arlington Police Department does not receive surplus military gear nor have military equipment. APD does not have or deploy tear gas, rubber bomb bullets or military weapons. At this time the Arlington Police Department does not have nor use tasers. The Chief of Police does not promote any training with military police. Additionally, the Department complies with all mutual aid agreements that fall under Massachusetts General Law, in which one department may call on another for assistance. APD is a part of the Northeastern Massachusetts Law Enforcement Council (NEMLEC), a consortium of police departments in Middlesex and Essex Counties, and two County Sheriff's Departments. Member agencies operate by sharing resources and

personnel, collectively providing services to each other that might not be available to one.

Since 2020 the Chief of Police committed to researching Body Worn Cameras while addressing budget concerns. During the 2021 Annual Town Meeting funding for the cameras was approved for FY 2022, and the Town is currently negotiating with unions regarding their use and implementation.

What education, beyond high school and the police academy basic training, are Arlington's police officers required to have?

Most APD officers have at least a bachelor's degree and many have master's degrees. Massachusetts Civil Service, which APD is part of, requires a high school education. Throughout their career officers must acquire a minimum of 40 hours of training per year, and additional training is often mandated by the Chief of Police. The Town offers education incentives for completing college and or graduate courses in fields related to effective policing, and the Department's Training Lieutenant provides officers guidance in finding courses that fill in gaps in their knowledge and understanding.

Do some officers work in office roles, and what are these roles?

Members of the Arlington Police Department assume many different roles and responsibilities. Some officers perform administrative assignments, also referred to as support jobs, that are outside of, but support normal patrol operations. This role does not exclude the other responsibilities an officer holds, if someone is on full duty status departmental policy requires them to carry the issued firearm given to them. Supporting officers may be asked to respond when additional support is needed. Officers also hold roles involved with traffic and details.

What is a police detail?

A police detail is the assignment of one or more officers for a particular duty. A police detail is typically present at any road work where traffic must be diverted or events with special safety or security concerns. Police are assigned details outside of their working hours and are paid by the vendor, individual, or company that requests their presence.

Does Arlington allow retirees to work details?

While the current mandatory age for retirement for officers is sixty-five, a clause in the Collective Bargaining Agreements, approved by Town Meeting, allows for retirees to be re-hired without any Town benefits to perform police details. The Chief of Police would use retired police officers to fill details, that would not be able to be filled by full-time Arlington Police Officers. Retirees will only be allowed to work detail assignments and would not be allowed to work overtime shifts.

How would you assess the APD's readiness for change?

The Chief of Police recognizes that there are always opportunities to continue to improve and has committed to training, transparency, and accountability as a means to continue to adapt to changes in the community. The APD is a true community policing department that understands that it is the community that "authorizes" its policing

authority. The APD has for many years been a national leader in the offering of a jail diversion program, having a clinician on staff and also offering a nationally recognized opiate outreach initiative that has helped countless people suffering from opioid addiction as well as their families. The Department trains and will continue to train in de-escalation practices, implicit bias and procedural justice, and fair and impartial policing. Additionally, the APD has all 8 of the [8 Can't Wait](#) policies in place as recommended by [Campaign Zero](#), which emphasizes the commitment of adapting to changing needs and desires of the community.

Department of Planning & Community Development **Housing & Zoning**

How does housing relate to the Community Conversations?

Community Conversations was designed as a series of discussions centered around racism, racial equity, and policing in Arlington. Between 2020 and 2021 10 sessions have been held, and two sessions to date have strictly been focused on the issue of housing. The series is intended to open dialogues to address challenges past and present faced by the Town, to acknowledge plans for moving forward in the journey to dismantle the systemic racism that is embedded into all the Town's institutions, and to provide an opportunity for community voices and concerns to be heard and discussed.

Arlington's Community Conversations have highlighted the local, regional, state, and national history of slavery, racism, redlining, and exclusion. They have worked to educate the community about how the local policies and zoning established throughout Arlington's history have shaped who is able to live in Arlington today. They have demonstrated how policies and zoning have the power to create barriers or pathways to full participation in the benefits of living in the Arlington community.

The [Fair Housing Action Plan](#) and the [Housing Plan](#) are a steps forward from the discussion held at the Community Conversations. These plans present pathways toward addressing the inequities created in Arlington's history through changes to policy, practice, governance, and zoning. Together they identify specific actions that Town leadership, Town departments, and Town Meeting can take to ensure fair and equitable housing for anyone who desires to be a member of the Arlington community.

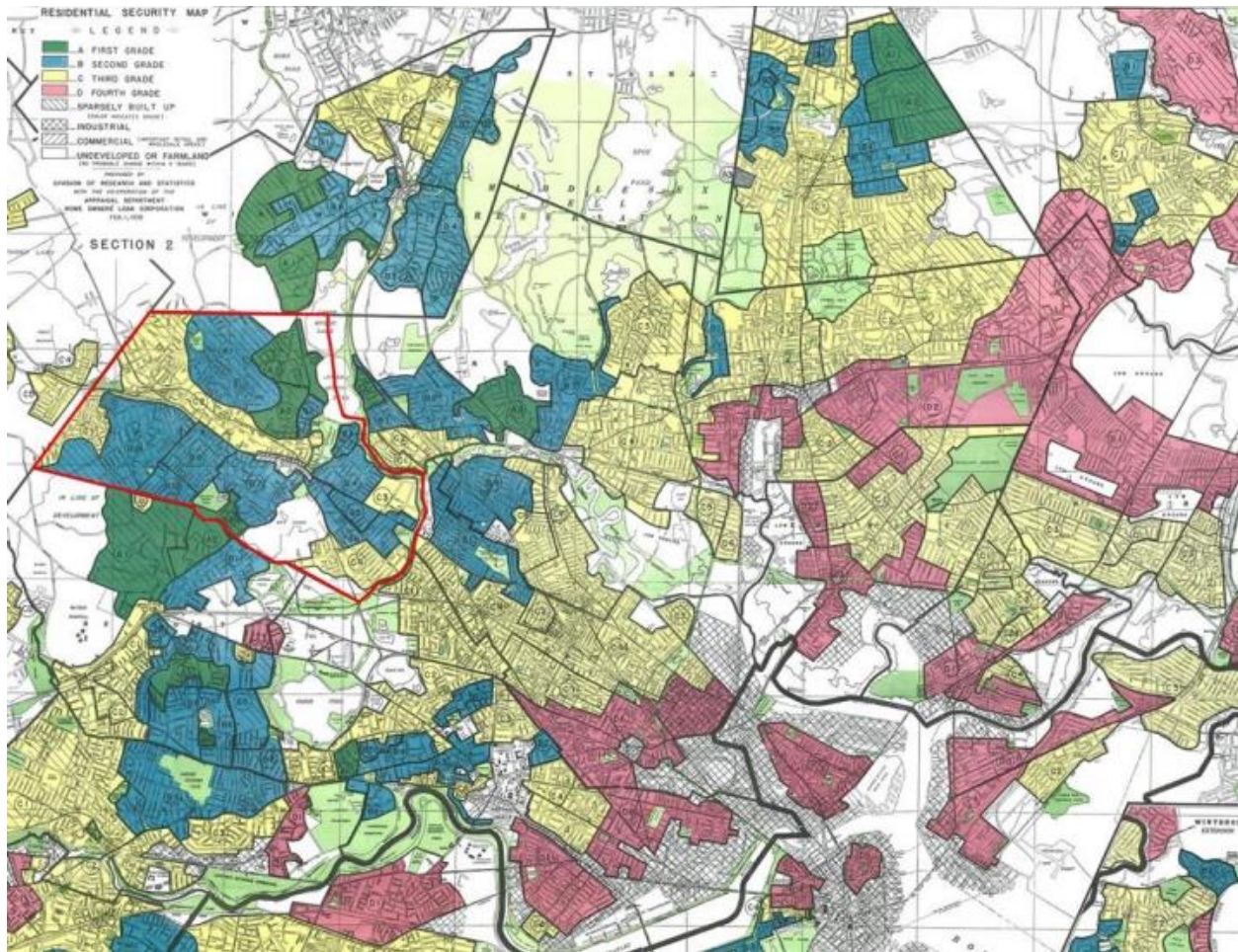
What is the history of zoning and exclusion in Arlington?

The [Arlington Fair Housing Action Plan](#) released in July, 2021 provides an overview of the history of zoning and exclusion in Arlington:

Like nearly every community in the United States, Arlington and greater Boston have a history of discriminatory practices in its housing and land use policies, which has led to persistent racial segregation and inequity regionally and in town. Twentieth century segregation in the northern United States was never as legally explicit as that in the South, but suburbs created more covert systems of racial segregation through web of contract law, financing practices, and development regulations. This historical context is an important framework for any fair housing

discussion because the legacy of that system—local policies that favored high-cost, low-density housing, coupled with federal housing policies that denied Black residents the opportunity to pursue generational wealth—are evidenced in the region’s continuing racial segregation today.

The housing market in greater Boston was significantly shaped by a practice we now call “redlining,” which determined where and for whom financing for housing was made available. Redlining emerged during the New Deal era in the 1930s, when the federal government began insuring residential mortgages. To guide underwriters in determining the level of risk associated with a given mortgage, the federal government produced maps that stated investment worthiness by location. The racial and ethnic composition of neighborhoods was explicitly considered a factor of investment security within these maps. Neighborhoods where the majority of residents were people of color or other ethnic or religious minorities were marked red or “hazardous” on the maps. Any level of racial integration was seen as a sign of “decline,” and marked yellow. Affluent White areas were marked “best” or “still desirable” in green or blue. The result of this practice was that residential mortgages and development financing, as well as the generational equity that comes with homeownership, were largely funneled to predominantly White suburbs while being denied to minority households and neighborhoods. The Black community suffered the most from these and related discriminatory practices.



Home Owners' Loan Corporation Residential Security Map, 1938, with Arlington outlined¹

Arlington was predominately classified as blue or “still desirable,” with yellow “declining” areas clustered along its borders with Somerville, Medford, and Lexington and along Massachusetts Avenue. These yellow areas—which notably overlap with much of the area where multifamily housing is allowed today—would have had fewer resources directed to them than the blue and green areas north and south of Massachusetts Avenue. The town as a whole would have received far more investment than the red “hazardous” areas in Boston, Cambridge, Somerville, and communities to the northeast. These so-called redlining maps cemented racial segregation in greater Boston for several decades. The maps’ use was formally banned in 1968 with the passage of the Fair Housing Act. Regional segregation was further embedded through “racially restrictive covenants,” contractual agreements written into property deeds that prevented homeowners from selling or renting their home to non-White households. While it is unclear how many racially restrictive covenants existed in Arlington, at least one Arlington resident traced the title of their home in East

¹ Source: Robert K. Nelson and Edward L. Ayers, accessed October 11, 2020, <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/>

Arlington and discovered a racially restrictive covenant included in the deed.² There are likely homes across Arlington and many of Boston's suburbs with this language still in the deed. Racially restrictive covenants were made unenforceable by a 1948 U.S. Supreme Court decision, but the practice was not truly eliminated until it was made illegal through the Fair Housing Act in 1968.^{3,4}

Yet another policy tool that shaped who could and could not live in Arlington was the Town's Zoning Bylaw. Like most municipalities in close proximity to downtown Boston, Arlington embraced growth and development in the Town's first Master Plan (produced in 1914), which was implemented in the Town's first Zoning Bylaw (adopted in 1924). The first Zoning Bylaw designated much of the town as residential and allowed apartment construction in three large business zones along Massachusetts Avenue. Allowed apartment uses were expanded several times in the immediate post-War era, as the Town sought to accommodate new families and grow its property tax revenue.

However, as segregation in greater Boston was challenged and integration became a real prospect across the region, Arlington's attitude toward development shifted. Concerted opposition to development projects began in the 1960s and became more organized in the early 1970s. Activists used both explicit and coded anti-integration language to rally opposition to apartment development and the related effort to downzone portions of the town.⁵ In 1975, following a one-year moratorium on multifamily construction, Town Meeting adopted a new, more complex Zoning Bylaw that created multiple new permitting processes for most forms of development and "downzoned" most of the town through restrictions on density, height, lot size, and parking. The ability to develop any type of residential use except higher-cost, single-family housing was severely curtailed. In 1991, Town Meeting adopted an amendment creating the R0 district, which extended this logic to require even larger lots of new single-family homes in some parts of town.

The new Bylaw elevated procedure and civic participation in the development process. While these do not necessarily result in anti-development outcomes, they created friction and increased opportunities to derail projects. The new Bylaw also incentivized a form of civic participation that magnified individual abutters rights, essentially creating a new property right out of (?)whole cloth: the right to exclude. In the decades since the 1975 Bylaw was adopted, housing development in Arlington plummeted, as it did in countless jurisdictions across

² <https://equitable-arlington.org/2020/07/12/color-of-law-old-allen-farm/>

³ Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston, "Historical Shift from Explicit to Implicit Policies Affecting Housing Segregation in Eastern Massachusetts," <https://www.bostonfairhousing.org/timeline/>

⁴ National Association of Realtors, "You Can't Live Here: The Enduring Impacts of Restrictive Covenants," <https://www.nar.realtor/sites/default/files/documents/2018-February-Fair-Housing-Story.pdf>

⁵ Alexander von Hoffman, "Creating an Anti-Growth Regulatory Regime: A Case from Greater Boston," Joint Center for Housing Studies, February 2006. See footnote 39 for a discussion of public and private use of racialized language.

the country that adopted similar changes to their Zoning Bylaws. Arlington's population even declined 21% between 1970 and 2000.⁶

Not all pro-development zoning advances fair housing goals. However, the anti-development history embedded in Arlington's Zoning Bylaw helped to maintain a system of racial exclusion that was created and perpetuated in the early- and mid-20th century by restricting housing supply. Though Arlington's population of non-White residents grew between 1970 and 2017 (from 1% to 22%), the proportion of non-White residents remains below the regional average (31%).⁷

The Fair Housing Action Plan goes on to assess that, "the legacy of Arlington's past exclusionary practices is embedded in the town's urban form and in laws that remain on the books. Addressing that legacy will require ongoing community conversation and openness to disagreement, and reforming laws on the basis of inclusion. Beyond this legal legacy, there is also the reputational legacy Arlington carries due to its history in the region. Arlington will need to demonstrate its proactive commitment to fair housing and a culture of inclusion, in order to overcome perceptions of the community as exclusive or exclusionary.

What tools do we have to make this better?

The Town's recently released [Fair Housing Action Plan](#) recommends a number of policy and planning changes that can be adopted at a local level to begin to address the legacy of local and regional exclusionary practices that have shaped the current demographics of the town. These include actions ranging from raising awareness of and improving enforcement of fair housing laws, changing Town policies and governance structures to address fair housing concerns, amending the Zoning Bylaw to facilitate the development of multifamily housing, and implementing non-zoning techniques to encourage development that increases fair housing choice, amending Arlington's local preference policy to be more welcoming to nonresidents, among many others.⁸

Additionally, the Town is developing a new [Housing Plan](#), which will serve as an update to the 2016 Housing Production Plan. The Housing Plan will

- update the Town's vision and strategy for providing housing that serves a range of needs;
- address the diverse housing needs for a range of household and housing types, including housing for seniors and families;
- be both data-driven and informed by the community through a series of engagement opportunities; and
- include a comprehensive needs assessment, affordable housing goals, and strategies for how to achieve those goals through policy and zoning changes.

A series of public engagement opportunities being held throughout the development of the plan are designed to reach out to members of the Arlington community to ensure the

⁶ US Decennial Census, 1970 and 2000

⁷ US Decennial Census, 1970; American Community Survey, 2013-2019 5-year estimates

⁸ Fair Housing Action Plan, Chapter IV: Collected Recommendations.

<https://www.arlingtonma.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/57214/63762033276600000#page=102>

plan incorporates a diverse range of voices. The community is invited to participate in virtual forums, online forums, meeting the planning team at the Arlington Farmer's Market, and even host their own small group discussion about Arlington's housing needs using the plan's [*Meeting in a Box*](#) kit.

Once completed, the Housing Plan will describe Arlington's housing needs, identify housing production goals (including affordable housing), and describe a plan for achieving those goals through policy and zoning action steps.

General questions or comments about any of these responses can be directed to Jillian Harvey, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Division Director, dei@town.arlington.ma.us
Specific questions about the Arlington Police Department can be directed to Chief of Police Juliann Flaherty, jflaherty@town.arlington.ma.us
Specific questions or comments about the ongoing Housing Plan, may be directed to Kelly Lynema, Assistant Director, Department of Planning & Community Development, klynema@town.arlington.ma.us