




## Housing Corporation of Arlington Community Investment Plan for 2020- 2025 Background Information

The Housing Corporation of Arlington's **mission** is to provide and advocate for decent affordable housing for low and moderate-income families and individuals in Arlington and surrounding communities, while promoting social and economic diversity. The Board of Directors, committee members, volunteers and small professional staff have all worked closely with residents, churches, businesses, tenants, the Town, and housing professionals over the years to keep Arlington and the surrounding communities diverse and stable.

The Housing Corporation of Arlington provides a variety of housing services to low- and moderate-income residents which include developing a growing portfolio of affordable housing units, providing homelessness prevention grants to stabilize residents' housing situations and referring residents in crises to social service agencies in the area. As a thirty-two hundred membership organization, HCA is the local certified Community Development Corporation (CDC) and Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) in Arlington.

HCA is run by a thirteen-member Board of Directors. Board members include bankers, financial consultants, HCA tenants, architects, social workers, community organizers, housing developer, staff at Harvard and MIT, business owners and other interested community residents. Every board member is elected by HCA's general membership as are the Board Treasurer and Clerk. Most of board members reside in Arlington. The board and four committees provide an ongoing platform for active involvement of community residents and stakeholders in the mission, planning and implementation of the organization's work.

Strategic Planning Retreats are held every 7 years, the last was held on January 21, 2013. A full day was set aside to discuss program and organizational strengths, the potential for organizational expansion, identifying and prioritizing strategic issues, and planning for sustainable ways to grow and fund future efforts. In all, twenty-two people participated in paving the way forward. They included Town employees, Board Members, staff, community



residents and tenants. Annual half day sessions are held to review progress and chart the next year's specific goals.

This CIP Plan has been discussed and will be approved at the HCA March Board Meeting to be held on March

### **Section 1:**


#### **Current Service Area/ Constituency**

Housing Corporation of Arlington's (HCA) primary service area is the Town of Arlington. Arlington is a community roughly 3 miles long with three defined areas: East Arlington, Arlington Heights and Downtown. According to the 2010 US Census, Arlington's population of roughly 44,992. citizens in 19200 households represents a vibrant and strong employment base with unemployment of less than 2.5%. Individuals over 65 years in age account for less than 16% of the population and the median age of the community is 41.7 years. The median household income in Arlington as of 2019 was \$103,594, an increase of over \$6,000 since 2016. significantly higher than the statewide average of \$64,081. For the population of Arlington that is 25 years and older, 52.8% hold a bachelor's degree or higher professional degree or certification. The national average for the same category of education is roughly 31%. 78.4% of Arlington's population identifies as "White alone," 2.4% identify as "Black," 11.4% identify as "Asian alone," and 4.31% identify as Hispanic or Latino, 2.5% identify as "Multiracial." Arlington has a 5.15% poverty rate.

HCA will be serving those community members at or below 60% of area median income. All HCA's units are and will continue to be rented to this population. We also provide program services such a social service referral, financial education and mentoring through workshops, the Homelessness Prevention Program and support of the Arlington Food Pantry/ Arlington Eats Market, and Food Link.

According to a September 19, 2012 article in the Boston Globe, "Rents soar in suburbs west of Boston," median asking prices for monthly rents jumped 14.6% from July 2011 to July 2012 to a high of \$2,416. Zillow reports housing prices and rents have continued to skyrocket forcing many community members to use more than 50% of their income for housing and forcing many households to move further west seeking more affordable housing. Typical market rents for a one bedroom are \$1900, for a three bedroom is \$3000. Currently, 5.9% of units in Arlington are affordable (1,149 units). The need is high for affordable housing in Arlington, and waitlists are long. Average home value is \$577,000.

HCA has a combined 500 household waiting list. The largest demand is for one and two-bedroom units with far fewer applications for the larger three and four-bedroom family units, although statewide the demand appears to be for family housing. Ongoing analysis of the waitlist will assist in determining the type of units HCA will develop in the future.



It is projected that the total number of senior-headed households in the region will grow 30% over the next ten years as the first wave of Baby Boomers ages past 65. Cities and towns need to allow and facilitate more diverse housing opportunities—such as multifamily housing near a town center.

The Arlington Housing Authority (AHA) has a total of 473 people on their waitlist for a one-bedroom unit, with 81 of those individuals from Arlington. For AHA’s two-bedroom units, there are 955 households on the waitlist. Arlington’s Millbrook Square Apartments, a senior low-income housing apartment subsidized by the federal government, has a waitlist of 86 individuals who are 62 plus years of age and 31 disabled who are under the age of 62 for 146 units. According to Arlington Housing Authority, “There are 571 applicants on the Centralized Waiting List, who are receiving an Arlington preference, i.e.: they live or work in town.”

Recent affordable housing lotteries in Arlington have high numbers as well. In November 2012, Housing Corporation of Arlington’s lottery for our Capitol Square Apartments totaled 333 eligible applications, with 70 of those households from Arlington for the 32 units. In February 2013, Alta Brigham Square’s 17 affordable units in Arlington received a total of 135 applications, 60 being complete and eligible, for their lottery. Twenty six of those 60 households were from Arlington. In September 2019, 20 Westminster received 189 applications for 9 units.

In a review of the demographics of the tenants in the Capitol Square Development, 59% of the tenants are over age 50, 71% are over 38 years old. 10 tenants were formerly homeless, 15 have either mobile or project-based vouchers. There are 11 HOME units and 32% of tenants were already Arlington residents.

Lexington, Belmont, Winchester, Melrose, Medford, Malden Watertown, Waltham and Everett have been identified as a secondary market for development efforts through Academy Development Partners (ADP), which was established in 2011 as a related entity to HCA created to develop affordable housing outside of Arlington. So far, although several have been reviewed, no development projects have reached the level of “real” in any of these communities. Instead, increased diligence and negotiations on sites in Arlington have sparked several new projects.

## **Section 2**

### **Involvement of Community Residents and Stakeholders**

1. As a membership organization, HCA membership has increased members from 456 in 2012 to more than 3752 members in 2019, total 2018 regular individual donors raised \$49,563. Since 2012 membership fees have brought in over \$300,000 in operating support.
2. The organization is accountable to these members and makes every effort to keep them

informed and involved. Information on of HCA's Programs and activities is regularly sent out through newsletters, tweets, Facebook, Chimpmail (our direct mail service), our new webpage and at events. At the Annual Meeting, members elect Board Members, the Treasurer, the Clerk, and vote on any bylaw changes. HCA's intent is to have informed and involved members. We usually have over 100 people attend the Annual Meeting. Over 200 individuals and families join staff and Board members on the annual Walk for Affordable Housing. To fund the Homelessness Prevention Program, HCA does an annual appeal letter sent to each Arlington household. HCA typically raises more than \$30,000 for the program annually.

3. HCA has 5 committees all comprised of volunteers: The Board (15), Finance (5), HPP (3), Governance (2), Real Estate (9). Committee membership is in parenthesis.
4. Finance, Real Estate Committees continue to meet monthly with prepared agendas and minutes which are approved at the following meeting. Committee Chairs present committee reports at the monthly Board meetings. The Homelessness Prevention Program Committee meets on an as needed basis depending on the number of requests for assistance to the program. Typically, they meet to discuss applications several times a month.
5. Fundraising Committee works on 5 significant events throughout the year The Annual Meeting, The Annual Walk for Affordable Housing, VIP Donor Breakfast to present both the CITC program and Planned Giving, the Homelessness Prevention Annual Appeal, Annual Membership Drive.
6. Financial Statements are provided to and reviewed with the Finance Committee and the Board monthly. Board and Committee members have significantly improved their understanding of the financials and of asset management. Recently, HCA hired an accountant with asset management experience in affordable housing. She will be working closely with the Executive Director and the Finance Committee. HCA's accounting system has now been transitioned to the online Quickbooks system which required a lot of cleaning up of old accounts from 2004 onward!!
7. HCA has formed several new partner relationships and maintained existing partnership in the surrounding communities over the past years. Community stakeholders and partners now include:
  - Arlington Food Pantry/Arlington EATS – a new merger
  - Arlington Council on Aging
  - Arlington Belmont Crew Club
  - Arlington Board of Health
  - Arlington Chamber of Commerce
  - Brookline Bank
  - Belmont Savings Bank
  - Caldwell Banker
  - Cambridge Savings Bank

- CEDAC
- CHNA17
- Charlesbank Homes Foundation
- Mission of Deeds
- PCI Loan Fund
- Somerville Homeless Coalition
- TD Bank
- Watertown Savings Bank
- Winchester Coop Bank
- Winchester Housing Partnership Board
- East Cambridge Savings
- Eastern Bank
- Food Link
- Home Start
- Interfaith Coalition of Houses of Worship representing 15 faith communities
- Just a Home
- Just A Start
- Lahey Medical Centers
- Leader Bank
- Mt. Auburn Hospital
- Arlington Youth Counseling Center
- Arlington Police Social Worker and outreach workers
- Arlington Public Schools Social workers
- Arlington Public Library Staff

These relationships generate volunteers that HCA utilizes to support staff. More than 20 volunteers work to plan and execute the Annual Walk for Affordable Housing by gathering donations from local merchants for the raffle, organizing the T-shirt give away, the concessions for cotton candy, hot dogs, balloons, games and the actual walk. Over 100 walkers complete a 2-mile route through Arlington Town Center holding “Support Affordable Housing “signs and marching behind our musicians, usually the Hot Tamale Brass Band. More than 100 Arlington and Lexington merchants donate gifts or gift certificates from restaurants, gift shops, hairdressers, and acupuncturists to martial arts, boxing, mosaic and other adult and children’s art classes. All food is donated by Starbucks, Whole Foods, Food Link, Stop & Shop, pizzas from Andrina’s, Not Your Average Joe’s and Northside Italian Pizza.

Volunteers from Arlington High School, members and other supporters help stuff and mail the HPP annual appeal of 19,000 letters in November and 3800 annual membership mailing in September.

HCA has a few writers in the community who volunteer articles for the Arlington Advocate.

A local zoning attorney volunteers many hours or steeply discounts her fees to assist in zoning changes.

Local graduate students do intern work such as the creation and analysis of the HPP data base and past program achievement.

The HPP Committee is composed of a retired social worker on the HCA Board, the Director of the Arlington Council on Aging, and the founder of “One Step at A Time”, a program working with domestic violence survivors.

HCA Staff and members of the Board serve on Town of Arlington Committees such as the Homelessness Committee, Housing Plan Implementation Committee, Arlington Heights Planning Committee, Finance Committee. The Executive Director is a Town Meeting Member.

### **Section 3 Plan Goal**

#### **Affordable Housing Development Goals:**

- Close a larger multi-unit development project every two to three years
- Continue to develop smaller projects at the same pace
- Continue capital improvement plan for existing portfolio

### **Section 4 Activities**

#### **Pipeline Projects:**

##### **20 Westminster Arlington: To be completed December 2019**

Housing Corporation of Arlington (HCA) purchased the building and land at 20 Westminster Ave in Arlington, MA in March 2014. HCA intends to redevelop the existing Church Hall into a transit oriented, 9-unit affordable rental housing development. HCA has received approval from the Arlington Zoning Board of Appeals for a comprehensive permit through the 40B process with Mass Housing. The redevelopment will use the existing building footprint. The green open space at the front of the building will be landscaped as a perennial garden with perhaps sculptures provided by local artists. The unit breakdown proposed is 1- three-bedroom unit, 2- two-bedroom units, 5-one-bedroom units and a studio. Three of the units will be wheelchair accessible. The project will add 9 units and 17,870 sq. feet of land to the affordable housing stock State Housing Inventory for Arlington

**Downing Square Broadway Initiative, 19R Park Street and 117 Broadway, Arlington:** - funded, expected to close Jan 2020.

**19 R Park Ave:** HCA purchased the one-acre parcel containing lots B and C at 19 R Park Ave in Arlington in August 2016. The site is located behind the CITGO station at the intersection of Park Ave and Lowell Street in Arlington and stretches back from Lowell Street to the Minuteman Bike Path then runs horizontally along the bike path for several hundred feet. HCA's proposed project has two buildings, one facing the bike path running east to west and one at the corner of Lowell and Park Ave. HCA's proposed project will contain 34 units of multifamily rental units affordable to households earning 60% or less of the area median income. The large building on lot B will be a four-story elevator structure with 28 units. The smaller building will be a 6-unit three story walk up. The total unit mix will be 15- one, 14 -two bedrooms and 5- three-bedroom units.

The site will be accessed by a driveway from Lowell Street approximately 100 feet from the intersection of Lowell and Park Ave. Parking will be a total of 23 spaces with three being handicapped accessible. The large building will have one elevator with a common laundry room. Both buildings are designed to be as close to net 0 efficiency as possible. Heating, hot water and cooling will be high efficiency systems. Solar panels are anticipated for the roof. Passive solar is being considered. All appliances will be energy star rated.

The site is contaminated with pcbs, lead, arsenic and vocs although some lead stabilization was completed by the seller. Significant environmental testing has been completed. Phase I and II reports have been completed; test wells are in place for sampling. The project team has defined the scope of the remediation which includes removal of some contaminated soil and encapsulation of a large area of the site. The cost is anticipated to be approximately \$550,000. HCA has engaged Davis Square Architects with GEI for the geotechnical and remediation work. Delphi Construction will be hired as the General Contractor for all three buildings. Construction at the 19R Park Ave site is expected to take 18 months.

**117 Broadway: Arlington Food Pantry:** This site was purchased by Housing Corporation of Arlington in September 2014 and housed the Arlington Food Pantry and Food Link since 2014. The project is now fully funded, and a financial closing is anticipated for January 2020. Enterprise Communities is our investor in the 9% tax credits. The site will contain a new four-story mixed-use elevator building with commercial on the first floor and affordable rental units on three floors above. The fourth floor will set back 6 feet. The retail space is approximately 2500 sq. feet and faces Broadway and Everett. The retail space will enter from Broadway with recessed openings with overhangs. 14 units of affordable housing will be on the three upper floors. The unit mix is 2 one-bedroom units, 10 two-bedroom units and 2 three-bedroom units. There will be 17 parking spaces accessed from Everett Street. The site overlooks the open green Lussiano Field in the rear and the Thompson School beyond. The intent is to achieve as close as possible to a net 0 building using energy



efficient heating, water and electric. All appliances will be energy saver rated. Units will be rented to households making 60% or less of area median income.

The project is transit oriented with three bus lines along Broadway. One line goes to Medford, one to Cambridge and one to Alewife. Massachusetts Ave is two blocks away with three additional bus lines: the 77 to Harvard Square, the 79 to Alewife and the 350 to Alewife through the Mall.

It was HCA's work that convinced the Town that a second location for the Food Pantry would benefit many hungry families better than the initial Marathon St. location. Now the Broadway location has become a hub of food centered programs such as the Arlington Food Pantry, Food Link, Arlington Eats, and the Gleaners where they work in conjunction with and in support of one another. Specifically, they have come together in support of Thompson School which has the highest rate of free breakfast children in Town as well as the seniors living in the Arlington Housing Authority units. The Food Pantry went from one location opened one day a month serving 40 individuals to open each week for four hours serving 125 people each day. Food Link went from collecting bread from Panera weekly by its two founders to having its own van, two paid staff and distributing fresh vegetables, fruit, eggs, milk, and bread. Food Link will be 5 years old in March. What began as picking up bread at one Panera cafe now includes 120 volunteers rescuing food not only at that Panera, but also at 12 additional supermarkets and specialty stores in the area collecting and distributing over 30,000 pounds of fresh food – and reaching over 5,000 people through 30 social agencies – each month.

The Food Pantry has merged with Arlington EAAST and will rent the commercial space at Broadway as the Arlington Eats Market. They will continue to operate as a food pantry.

Construction completion is expected 12 months after construction start.

**Additional Potential Projects** HCA staff has brokers continuing to look for additional sites for development.

**2021 Mass Ave:** The most recent site under negotiations is 1021 Mass Ave a 21,000 square foot site which would be redevelopment into a multi-story development. The existing building would be demolished. The site next door, 1025-27 Mass Ave is a 20,000 square foot site currently owned by a friend of the Executive Director would be interested in selling the site to HCA for redevelopment. Each site has a historic building on it. The building at 2021 is not particularly exciting as a historic site and a demolition permit by the owner has been requested since February 2019. Arlington has a one year wait for demolition of historic buildings. We are examining methods of achieving the zoning change required for the proposed redevelopment. A friendly 40B may be the best option.



**Fox Library Redevelopment:** The Town has plans to redevelopment the Fox Library at 174 Mass Ave Arlington. HCA has proposed a mixed-use building of library and Library offices and community space on the first two floors and affordable residential rental housing on floors three through four or five. Chicago has developed several this type combination with beautiful results. See the attachment for examples.

**Massachusetts Ave development in Town Center** There are one story commercial buildings along Mass Ave which are underutilized with vacant storefronts and deferred maintenance leading to a distressed look and dampening effect on the potential vitality of the town center. HCA is pursuing negotiations with the owners to purchase a block and develop mixed use buildings with retail/commercial spaces on the street level and four to five stories of affordable residential units above.

### **Continuing capital improvement plan for existing units**

HCA's Capital Improvements Plan started in 2014 to address deferred maintenance in the portfolios 27 properties will continue to be a part of our CIP Plan. Although much has been accomplished in the past two years there is continuing need to upgrade and repair our existing inventory. HCA has invested over \$1M since 2014 in new roofs, upgraded heating and hot water systems, siding, tuckpointing, unit improvements such as new kitchens, flooring, bathrooms, window replacements, etc.

### **Asset Development**

Currently through our Homelessness Prevention Program HCA now offers quarterly Financial Workshops which will continue to be presented by staff from Leader Bank, Belmont Savings or Cambridge Savings Bank. These workshops introduce budgeting, why saving is important and how to accomplish it, understanding your credit and what it means. Participants are largely HCA tenants, Housing Authority tenants and Homelessness Prevention Program clients.

### **Community Planning**

- The Town has developed a Housing Production Plan approved by 2016 Special Town Meeting which incorporates much of HCA's work, ideas, and vision. HCA staff and one Board member participated in developing the plan and will serve as committee members of the newly created Housing Committee to monitoring ongoing compliance with and to oversee and implement the Housing Plan. See the link: [www.arlingtonma.gov/home/showdocument?id=30465](http://www.arlingtonma.gov/home/showdocument?id=30465)

- HCA has been involved in the planning of the mixed-use zoning bylaws changes approved by the 2018 Town Meeting. The Executive Director and two Board members are Town Meeting members. Proposed changes to allow for even greater density will be introduced at the 2017 Town meeting. This was envisioned in the Town's Master Plan. See the link:  
<http://www.arlingtonma.gov/departments/planning-community-development/masterplan>
- Staff and Board are on the Housing Plan Implementation Committee. This year warrants are being prepared for submittal to Town Meeting April 2020 to establish a Housing Trust Fund and to support establishing a Real Estate Transfer Tax to fund affordable housing.
- Staff are participating in the Arlington Heights Plan for the upgrading and potential redevelopment of sections of Arlington Heights.

### **Section 5: How Success will be Measured and/or Evaluated**

- The Board continues to evaluate our success against previous years financial position and the increase of the portfolio. Clearly showing cash flow from all buildings is a requirement. Ongoing oversight of the property management has been significant with meetings ongoing with the property management team at Maloney Properties.
- Monitoring HCA's increase in our portfolio, the development and creation of new units of affordable housing
- Meeting the needs of the wait list.
- Following the recommendations of the Housing Production Plan. This will be reviewed annually by the Town's Housing Committee overseeing the Housing Production Plan.
- Serving on the Town's Housing Plan Implementation Committee and providing leadership to accomplish the goals set out.
- Increasing HCA donors and financial support will be an indicator that the organization is relevant and satisfying unmet needs. Continuing to grow the number of donors will be an indicator of success and relevance.
- Assisting more tenants in reaching a new level of savings and equity. In 2018 four out of ninety tenant households moved into market rate unit's due to improved life conditions through marriage, better jobs and in one case of purchasing a house. This will be measured at the annual certification of income and by monitoring and recording why tenants are moving out of HCA units. Five tenant families over the past four years have purchased their own home.
- Increasing the number of participants in our financial workshops, mentoring through the Co-Location relationship with Metro Housing Boston.

- Monitoring our tenants and HPP clients to see they are stabilizing their living situation, have other social service needs met and to see that some are reaching beyond that into better jobs and home ownership.
- Establishing and maintaining good working relationships with development and financial consultants to complement staff expertise.
- Sending staff to new training opportunities
- Creating new programs to meet identified needs of our tenants, HPP clients and community residents at large.


### **Section 6: Collaborative Efforts to support implementation.**

- Due to the involvement and close working relationship with the Town Planning Staff with HCA staff and Board members, several areas of activity for HCA are integrated into the Town's approved Master Plan. See the link: <http://www.arlingtonma.gov/departments/planning-community-development/masterplan>
- The Town has developed a Housing Production Plan approved by 2016 Special Town Meeting which incorporates much of HCA's work, ideas, and vision. HCA staff and one Board member participated in developing the plan and will serve as committee members of the Housing Plan Implementation Committee to monitoring ongoing compliance with and to oversee and implement the Housing Plan. See the link: [www.arlingtonma.gov/home/showdocument?id=30465](http://www.arlingtonma.gov/home/showdocument?id=30465)
- HCA remains involved in Arlington Redevelopment Board and the Planning Department to encourage mixed-use zoning bylaws changes to be presented at Town Meeting. The Executive Director and two Board members are Town Meeting members. Proposed changes to allow for even greater density will be introduced at the 2020 Special Town meeting. This was envisioned in the Town's Master Plan and the Vision 2020 Plan see the links: [Your Town, Your Future: A Master Plan for Arlington \(Full Document\)](#)

### **Section 7**

#### **Integration of Activities with Community Strategy and Vision**

On our annual reevaluation of the strategic plan, HCA staff and Board along with employees of the Town and resident stake holders will start the meeting by revisiting the organization's vision to tie the strategy to the vision. Town employees and a few residents attend committee meeting and some Board Meetings. Information on activities of the



organization and its plans are discussed at membership meetings, events, in newsletters, and on the website. Over 100 residents and stakeholders attend the annual meeting and most events have 60 people at a minimum. Over 200 walkers attend the Walk for Affordable Housing each year. Plans and programs are up on HCA's webpage for anyone to read about.

Staff and Board members are actively involved with the Town vision and activities serving on committees to develop warrant articles and policies to serve both the organization's vision and the Town vision.

We will continue to offer ways for Board Members to remain actively involved in setting policy for our ongoing work through setting specific days for planning and evaluation.

We will strengthen our committees and expand committee membership through which service is expanded and opportunities offered for continued innovation and growth.

The committee structure will also provide a way for community residents and members to be involved with our efforts to "train" to become future Board members and continue to help us grow and improve conditions for all our residents.


HCA participates in forums and Town wide meeting to provide input and sometime leadership on issues relevant to HCA. We use these forums as educational tools for the community to better understand affordable housing and it's impacts on the community for a better, more diverse, more sustainable community.

HCA staff and board will continue to remain actively involved with the Town's Master Plan implementation process by attending meetings, providing input, and serving on committees. HCA continued relationships with our elected officials will also be maintained and strengthened. HCA encourages discussions with parts of the community who may not understand or like HCA's vision and purpose. These outreach efforts have paid off in surprising ways. Some of our "long time foes" now talk about the need for affordable housing in open forums as the town investigates more dense housing. We welcome the change of heart!

## **Section 8**

### **Financing Strategy**

The financing plan for the larger real estate projects will be the customary Low-income tax credit, 4 or 9%, secondary soft funding such as State HOME, State Stabilization Funds, Housing Trust Fund, Local CDBG, Local HOME, Private First Mortgage or bonds and other possible funding sources such as Federal Home Loan Bank, McKinney Funds etc. Smaller



projects (2 to 6 units) will more likely be funded with Town CDBG, Private first Mortgage, Local HOME funds, and perhaps grant funding or cash from HCA.

HCA has proposed the Town implement and participate in the state-wide Real Estate Transfer Tax efforts. The Housing Plan Implement Committee is preparing a warrant for 2020 Town Meeting.

**20 Westminster** has received funds from CDBG (\$750,000), Local HOME with NSC (\$1.35M), CPA funds, (\$500,000), Brookline Bank (\$650,000) State Historic Credits (\$500,000 committed), HCA (\$82,000). DHCD and Mass Housing CHSI (\$320,000 with an increase of \$200,000 potentially). A total development cost of \$84.,000.

**Downing Square Broadway Initiative** composed of 19R Park Ave and 117 Broadway is 48 unit, \$16M project. All funds are committed. Closing is expected early 2020. Construction will start immediately after closing.

**Our ongoing Capital Improvement Program** funded by Town CDBG of \$100,000 to \$200,000 annually since 2014 committed and potential other funding from local banks and foundations. The funding is used for roof replacements, new siding, heating, and hot water upgrades, upgrading of unit kitchens, baths, flooring, repairing, or replacing porches, replacement windows where warranted, etc.


## **Section 9**

### **History, Track record and Sustainable Development**

To promote a more diverse community where everyone can live sustainably, HCA works to make Arlington inclusive for all residents through two programs: our Affordable Rental Housing Program, our Homelessness Prevention Program and our new program 2018 the Arlington Housing Services Network (HSN). With the acquisition and redevelopment of 32 units known as Capitol Square Apartments and the redevelopment of the Historic Kimball Farmer House of 3 units, and 20 Westminster scheduled to complete the rehab of 9 new units of affordable housing, HCA now owns 102 units of [affordable rental housing](#) in Arlington. Eligibility for our Affordable Apartment Program is determined by household income annually adjusted by HUD. Eligible incomes are at or below 60% of the area median income for all units, some units are capped at 30% AMI depending on funding sources.

### **Affordable Apartment Program**

A former thriving agriculture and mill town with a strong sense of community, situated just six miles from Boston proper, Arlington has been, and continues to be, a very desirable place to live. Because of the economic turmoil of the late 1970s and early 80s, mortgage interest rates reached a high of 18%. For the first time, the housing market in Arlington became out



of reach for individuals that were born and raised in the community. This was Arlington's first glimpse of an unstable housing market that would soon become the norm and eventually lead to overcrowded, displaced families and threats of homelessness throughout the area.

In 1986, a small group of Arlington town leaders and residents had the troubling realization that housing prices were far outpacing growth in income. Prices were escalating at 10% per year. Median single-family home prices were approaching \$200,000—out of reach for many of Arlington's renters and young adults who grew up in the area. The lack of open land for development added to the need for creative solutions. Out of crisis, community commitment, and opportunity, Housing Corporation of Arlington was launched in 1986 to address the community's growing affordable housing shortage.

In its early years, HCA provided down-payment assistance loans for first-time, moderate-income homebuyers. Incorporated as a 501(c)3 non-profit in 1990, HCA's mission statement, "to provide and advocate for decent, affordable housing for low- and moderate-income families and individuals in Arlington and surrounding communities, while promoting social and economic diversity," reflects the commitment of HCA to ensure that the community's most vulnerable members have adequate housing.


By the late 90s, the housing market began to shift with the growing acceptance of condo conversions of two-family houses. Suddenly, as older owners began selling their properties for record amounts, Arlington began facing the loss of its existing affordable rental stock. The Housing Corporation stepped in and purchased the first of its two-family houses in 2001.

By 2005, HCA had purchased and renovated 14 two-family buildings, serving 30 low-income families. Over the next four years, the Housing Corp focused on purchasing and improving one more two flat and several small apartment buildings, providing one- and two-bedroom units for smaller households. With the purchase and rehab of the Mass Ave project and the Forrest Peirce project, six properties containing twenty-eight rehabbed units were added to HCA's inventory. Most recently, with the acquisition and historic rehabilitation of 32 units known as the Capitol Square Apartments and the redevelopment of the historic Kimball Farmer House, HCA now owns and manages 103 units of in Arlington. Please see the attached map for locations.

Most of the two-family buildings have two- and three-bedrooms units. Three units contain four bedrooms and one five-bedroom units. All the two-family buildings and the Peirce building have individual boilers. Tenants pay their own heat, hot water and electric. In the larger buildings, the tenants pay only electricity as heat and hot water are covered in the rent.

At the beginning of 2013, HCA had two management companies under contract. Warren Realty managed the 58 scattered units under HCA ownership. Peabody Properties managed the Capitol Square Apartments, 32 units. This has led to many inefficiencies. Today Maloney Property Management manages the entire portfolio.

The financing for the scattered site 58 units has been a combination of local HOME, local CDBG and a private first mortgage. MHP (Massachusetts Housing Partnership) provides the



first mortgage on 40 units. Cambridge Savings is the first mortgage holder on 16 units and Winchester Savings Bank provided the mortgage on 2 units.

HCA Capitol Square Apartments LLC is funded with 4% Low Income Tax Credits, Federal and State Historic credits, tax exempt bonds, local HOME funds, local CDBG, State HOME funds, the Affordable Housing Trust Fund, HUD McKinney Vento, and Stabilization funds. The 4% credits were syndicated through MHIC (Massachusetts Housing Investment Corporation) to Brookline Bank and Cambridge Savings Bank. The historic credits, both Federal and State, will be purchased by Brookline Bank. The rent up of Capitol Square was completed April 30, 2013.

HCA is a CHDO with the North Suburban Consortium which provided operating support of \$25,000 annually.

### **Homelessness Prevention Program**

Since 2001, HCA has run Arlington's Homelessness Prevention Fund with private donations of \$30,000 to \$50,000 per year to prevent Arlington households from becoming homeless. In late 2009, HCA expanded the program by administering HUD's [Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program](#) (HPRP) with \$533,800. This three-year federal initiative provided funding for people with housing issues due to the recent economic downturn. In the past twelve years, HCA has assisted over 865 households in emergency housing situations in Arlington and the surrounding communities of Winchester, Belmont, and Lexington with over \$1M.

In 2013 the HPF program conducted an analysis by a Tufts University Intern to determine how effective the grants have been in preventing homelessness. Of the 18% of respondents, 95% were still housed in permanent affordable housing and 65% were still in the unit HCA assisted them in moving into or remaining in. A database was constructed of past client information and the results of this survey on the grant impacts. The data will be updated for new client input moving forward. The format is in excel, simple enough for staff, volunteers, or interns to continuously maintain with new client information. Surveys will be done annually and biannually for constant monitoring of the program. After analyzing the data, program adjustments were not seen as needed, however some may be implemented if warranted.

In addition, HCA engages in ongoing advocacy and educational efforts to improve housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income residents of the area and provides referrals to social service agencies when needed.



## **Sustainable Development Principles:**

1. Although HCA's units are scattered sites, they are concentrated along Mass Ave and Broadway located in nodes of 30-40 units within a block or two.
2. HCA supports community planning and works closely with the Town Planning office as projects are develop. HCA provides leadership on issues impacting affordable housing and community residents with lower income. HCA staff and Board members participate on planning and implementation committees in Town. Several community meetings are held to inform the residents of each new project and to solicit input. Although there is sometimes a NIMBY reaction, HCA strives to include community ideas and listens to community concerns.
3. As HCA moves forward to change zoning, secure special permits or 40B permits, we move through the process as quickly as possible incorporating new information and making changes quickly to appease community concerns. HCA staff serves on committees with the intention of expediting zoning changes to allow for more robust development throughout Arlington. HCA provides expertise at forums and Community meetings to educate residents regarding proposed changes or the need for additional changes.
4. HCA addresses any Conservation Commission concerns by being up front in hiring specialists to mark native wild species to preserve and protect the environment. The funded Downing Square Broadway proposal is on a brown field. 19R Park Ave is a brown field, environmentally dirty with pcps and vocs which HCA will remediate. Where we can, HCA adds to the open space in the Town such as the large green triangle of land at 20 Westminster which will become a perennial garden and hopefully a sculpture garden with local artist participation for revolving art shows.
5. HCA supports natural resources wisely by utilizing sustainable features as much as possible from reuse of materials, redevelopment of existing buildings, purchasing from local manufacturers, utilizing low voc paints, insulating structures, and implementing efficient heat and hot water production, etc. It is our intent to use solar both passive and active systems on the new buildings. We receive a grant of CDBG funding from the town to install solar panels on the Capitol Square buildings in 2020. The entire rental portfolio has been made energy efficient with insulation, tight building envelope, new low e glass windows and now heating systems are being upgraded and changed from oil burning to gas to lower utility bills and preserve our natural resources. Gardens are planted with perennials and drought resistant species. All of HCA's housing to date has been rehabilitation of existing buildings to preserve the original community character. With new construction, HCA is intent on respecting the community character.

6. HCA's portfolio expands and supports housing opportunity by developing a variety of housing types from fully accessible one and two-bedroom units to much larger 3-5-bedroom units for large families. Our buildings range from two family buildings with yards and garages, to small four or five-unit buildings to larger 12 to 14-unit buildings to suit a variety of households. All the units are conveniently located to services such as grocery stores, food, banks, stores, libraries, and public transportation etc. The new buildings will contain 1-3-bedroom units. Some will be elevator buildings with fully accessible units to accommodate the elderly and disabled. HCA tenants require fewer parking spaces than normally required in properties as they tend to use public transportation. HCA has been instrumental in informing the Arlington Redevelopment Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals to view fewer parking spaces as acceptable and in fact far preferable to vacant, unused parking spaces. HCA continues to locate new sites or existing building to create for affordable housing opportunity.
7. HCA's portfolio is transit oriented, situated on the main bus lines or within a block of Mass Ave, Broadway, or Summer Street with many MBTA lines running to Alewife, Harvard Square, Medford and Malden, Somerville, downtown Boston, and Cambridge Stations. Each building is conveniently located near the Minuteman bikeway in a very walkable town. Shelter for bikes provides security and an alternative to auto transportation.
8. Arlington is conveniently located near and has excellent transportation to major job centers such as Boston, Cambridge, Kendall Square, Burlington and the 128 Corridor. This allows community residents easy access to job and business opportunities.
9. Arlington is a green community and HCA supports all efforts by the Town to follow those principles including requiring our developments to be efficient, sustainable, transit oriented, walkable to Town center and shopping and services where possible and compatible with the community character. HCA is working with the Town Tree Committee to create and then implement a community wide plan to create the sense of boulevards by planting trees along corridors to enhance sustainable efforts and to mitigate climate change.
10. HCA staff and Board have been very involved with Arlington Town Government in creating the Master Plan, the Housing Production Plan, zoning changes to encourage denser mixed-use development along the commercial corridors. We are involved with the MPO transportation planning and work closely with MAPC, our State Senator Cindy Freidman and Representatives Sean Garballey and Dave Rogers on statewide issues. HCA is a MACDC member and member of National Low-Income Housing Coalition. HCA staff work with regional, statewide, and national organizations to implement changes to enhance affordable housing development and funding.



## **Update on CITC Credit Use since 2014**

HCA received the first of the CITC allocations in 2014 for \$50,000 and raised \$99,860 by December 2014.

In 2015, HCA received another \$50,000 in early 2015 and a second allocation of \$50,000 in fall 2015 for a total of \$100,000. We raised \$101,500 in donations by December 31, 2015.

In 2016 HCA received an allocation of \$50,000 and raised \$142,000 in donations by December 31, 2016. Leaving a balance of approximately \$28,320 in tax credits.

In 2017 HCA has received an allocation of \$129,615 and raised \$167,630.

In 2018 HCA received an allocation of \$150,000 and raised \$201,000.

In 2019 HCA received an allocation of \$135,000, We have raised \$100,000 to date. November and December are our biggest months for CITC fundraising.

