

TAX & FEE COMPENDIUM

Arlington County provides services benefitting the entire community, individual residents, and businesses – all of which are funded through a variety of revenue streams including taxes, fees, rents, grants, and Federal and State aid.

In the FY 2016 Adopted Budget Guidance to the County Manager, the County Board directed the Manager to provide a compilation of tax and fee tools that the Board has at its disposal, either on its own authority or as governed by the Commonwealth.

In response to the County Board’s direction, the Department of Management and Finance worked with each department to obtain detailed information on the fees charged and managed by the department. The compilation of taxes and fees, (available [in more detail online](#)) includes information on fees in both the General Fund and the Development Fund. This continues to be a work in progress as we refine the information received.

Local Taxes

In the FY 2019 Proposed Budget, local taxes total \$1.1 billion, 84% of the General Fund budget. More detail on each of these local taxes can be found in the Revenue section. Because Virginia is a Dillon law state, on many of the taxes, the State dictates what taxes can be charged and the tax rates. Arlington County has rates set either at the maximum rate or at rates that help us maintain our economic competitiveness in the region.

The only local tax that the County has not adopted, but legally could, is the Admissions tax. This is a tax on admissions paid for particular events including admissions on events sponsored by public and private educational institutions, admissions charged for sporting events, etc. Very few jurisdictions across the Commonwealth charge this tax and receipts are negligible for those that do. Staff believes this would generate minimal revenue for the County and could be administratively burdensome.

Fees

The fees listed in the compilation of taxes and fees ([found online](#)) include funds collected for Licenses, Permits, General Fees, Fines, Rent, and Fees for Charges for Services. Fees more often relate directly to payment for a service or product. The County uses fees to help fund services that meet particular criteria:

1. Fall within statutory or regulatory restrictions;
2. Contribute to providing efficient services; and
3. Either provide some individual benefit or promote common community values including safety (i.e., building and fire permits).

County fees are set based on many factors including the level of individual benefit, the cost of the service being provided, and the fee levels in comparable jurisdictions. Fees charged for services bear a reasonable relationship to the service for which the fee is imposed. Each department conducts an annual review of their fee levels and proposes changes when appropriate during the annual budget process.

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