

Arlington Vision Statement

"Arlington will be a diverse and inclusive world-class urban community with secure, attractive residential and commercial neighborhoods where people unite to form a caring, learning, participating, sustainable community in which each person is important."

Affordable Housing Principles

1. Housing affordability is essential to achieving Arlington's vision.
2. Arlington County government will take a leadership role in addressing the community's housing needs.
3. A range of housing options should be available throughout the County affordable to persons of all income levels and needs.
4. No one should be homeless.
5. Housing discrimination should not exist in Arlington.
6. Affordable housing should be safe and decent.

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As an element of the Comprehensive Plan, Arlington's Affordable Housing Plan must be consistent with and contribute to achievement of the Vision for Arlington County. The Housing Principles form the core philosophical foundation of Arlington's approach to affordable housing within the context of the County's total housing stock, economic base, and social fabric. These principles provide direction for Arlington's affordable housing goals, priorities, and policies.

1. Housing affordability is essential to achieving Arlington's vision.

Arlington strives to build an inclusive community which welcomes diverse populations, and encourages and empowers persons of all races, ages, ethnicities, sexual orientations, abilities, and incomes to be fully engaged in the community. Housing affordability directly contributes to the community's diversity and sustainability by enabling a wide range of households to reside in Arlington, especially households with limited means and persons with special needs. A community where diverse residents can meet all their needs locally and have opportunities to interact with the entire community is likely to have a greater sense of community.

Housing affordability is vital to the community's sustainability affecting the local economy and environment. A wide range of housing choices are needed to support the diverse jobs and wage levels needed to sustain the local economy. Businesses are better able to attract and retain workers when there is housing that is affordable nearby. Housing affordability directly contributes to smart growth and transit-oriented development that can reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicles, traffic congestion, commute times and air pollution.

2. Arlington County government will take a leadership role in addressing the community's housing needs.

Providing a range of housing choices affordable at various income levels requires the development and preservation of both committed and market-rate housing units. It also requires rental assistance and supportive services for those who are economically disadvantaged or who need support to live independently. Arlington will use clear land use and development policies to promote the active participation of housing developers and property owners in expanding the range of choice. The County will also partner with the private and non-profit sectors to provide housing for persons and households that the private housing market fails to reach.

3. A range of housing options should be available throughout the County affordable to persons of all income levels and needs.

Affordable housing should be available and accessible for persons of all needs; this includes different household sizes and family types, elderly persons, and persons with physical, mental and intellectual disabilities. Arlington County will work to provide housing opportunities across the County by focusing on persons and households that the private market fails to reach. Investments in affordable housing will be coordinated with other associated investments in community infrastructure, transportation infrastructure and services, neighborhood, and recreational, cultural, and human services.

4. No one should be homeless.

Preventing and ending homelessness is a critical element of the affordable housing plan. In concert with the previously adopted ten-year plan to prevent and end homelessness, the following guiding principles are incorporated:

- commitment from all sectors of the community;
- the implementation of best practices and evidence-based solutions, including “housing first”;
- the availability of affordable, appropriate housing options; and
- culturally competent and consumer-centered supportive services.

5. Housing discrimination should not exist in Arlington.

Fair housing law prohibits discrimination in housing. Limited income, less education or knowledge of rights, uncertain legal status, and less access to legal assistance limits housing choices for some households and makes them more susceptible to violations of fair housing law. Arlington will be vigilant in monitoring compliance and enforcement of fair housing laws to fully and consistently achieve the promise of non-discrimination.

6. Affordable housing should be safe and decent.

Local codes and ordinances mandate minimum conditions to ensure healthful and safe housing. Persons and households with fewer housing choices may live in housing that does not fully and consistently meet codes or are overcrowded. Arlington will be vigilant in monitoring compliance and enforcement of all health and safety codes and will aspire to a high quality living environment for all persons.