



ANNUAL REPORT

2019–2020



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ecoactionarlington.org

A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Elenor Hodges

ECOACTION ARLINGTON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In this 2019-2020 annual report, we're highlighting our unchanging commitment to realizing our vision. Each year we have expanded our focus, and we're moving closer to achieving our vision: *All Arlingtonians are collectively engaged in creating a sustainable community.* New program areas have garnered increased interest, attracted new supporters, and offered EcoAction Arlington members a means to speak with one voice concerning environmental policy and laws.

The establishment of our Advocacy Committee in October 2019 invited new supporters with a greater interest in environmental policy to contribute to EcoAction Arlington. Supporters of the Arlington County Community Energy Plan joined forces with EcoAction Arlington to make their voices heard. And, we advocated for decreasing the use of plastic by partnering with the 350 Fairfax Plastic Free Challenge and developing our Straw Free Arlington campaign. Our annual EcoExtravaganza fundraiser demonstrated our heightened interest in protecting our rivers and streams. One of our signature programs—cleanups—expanded to include a kayak cleanup on the Potomac River, making it possible to remove trash and debris that evades stream cleanups. It was an exciting start for our new fiscal year.

We entered 2020 with great anticipation—conducting many of our annual events like the MLK Day of Service cleanup and our Volunteer Social. Before the start of the second quarter, COVID-19 consumed and changed our lives. How we would continue our work was a bit of an enigma. Our traditional in-person Earth Day Cleanup became a Virtual Earth Month Cleanup. Support wasn't considerable, but we remained flexible, making changes and learning as we moved forward. Ongoing events continued in a virtual format, and our new program, *Love Our Living World*, launched as planned. Expansion of our programming continued with a Candidates Forum on environmental issues. For our Earth Day Breakfast, we examined the issue of environmental justice for the first time.

As the fiscal year came to a close, the tragic murder of George Floyd made clear the need to voice our support for environmental justice. The EcoAction Arlington Board made the critical decision to create a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee to oversee the work needed to become an actively anti-racist organization, including committing to develop a Justice and Inclusion Policy.

This year taught us more about our community and ourselves than we imagined. We're stronger than we know. Your resolve and continuing support reassured us of the promise in our mission. We have no doubt the key to accelerating our success in making Arlington more sustainable is by engaging all Arlington communities.

2019-2020 HIGHLIGHTS AND IMPACT



ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Nearly every aspect of life is dependent on access to energy. And, most energy sources create significant carbon emissions that exacerbate climate change. Working to decrease emissions in our daily life, 30 trained Energy Masters volunteers introduced 94 less advantaged families to simple energy efficiency and water conservation strategies, installing 64 low-flow aerators and showerheads and 277 LED light bulbs in their homes.



REDUCING LITTER

Simple behavior changes have the power to deliver tangible benefits for our natural resources. When litter and debris end up on our lands and streets, it often drifts into a tributary and eventually into our water supply. With trash comes dangerous chemicals and toxic waste with the potential of harming marine life and humans. Our efforts brought volunteers together to thwart potential impacts by removing 470 bags of trash from our streams and waterways.



ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

Great ideas, good intentions, and a willingness to make a difference are only part of what makes EcoAction Arlington successful. Implementing and accomplishing our goals requires the support of dedicated volunteers with diverse environmental interests and skills that enable hands-on activities and strategic efforts that help us achieve our vision to engage all Arlingtonians. Despite the challenges resulting from the pandemic, volunteers contributed 2,885 volunteer hours to help make Arlington more sustainable.

2019-2020 HIGHLIGHTS AND IMPACT



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INCREASING TREE CANOPY

Every new tree planted in Arlington improves our environment. This year, EcoAction Arlington planted 298 new trees at homes and in neighborhoods throughout the county. Each tree adds value to the homeowner's property, cools the air, diminishes runoff and erosion from storms, and removes carbon from the air helping to reduce greenhouse gases. Each time a new tree is planted we also enjoy the serenity and beauty derived from trees.



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INSPIRING OUR FUTURE

Around the world, youth are raising their voices to highlight the critical state of our environment. Nurturing our youth's environmental interests and knowledge helps ensure tomorrow's decision-makers understand the impact of their current choices. The work of EcoAction Arlington volunteers and staff through hands-on lessons helped increase the environmental knowledge of 244 students, helping them recognize the need to care for nature.



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PARTNERSHIPS FOR GOOD

Year after year, our outreach and accomplishments grow as we join forces with organizations that share a common goal to care for our natural resources. As we expand partnerships, we build bridges to help more people reduce their environmental impact. Through partnerships with the Arlington Solar and EV Charger Co-op and the Rain Barrel and StormwaterWise programs, we helped Arlington residents transition to solar energy, connect to a source for solar EV-chargers, recognize the benefits of rain barrels and other strategies to decrease storm runoff.

2019-2020 SNAPSHOTS

1000 MORE ENERGY EFFICIENT HOMES

Among the many challenges faced in 2020, there were some bright spots in our natural environment, especially in reducing emissions. Early in 2020, the Energy Masters program marked the achievement of a significant milestone—helping its 1,000th family increase energy efficiency and water conservation in their homes.

While not measured, the impact of the Energy Masters program goes beyond the hands-on work they do to help some of the areas' less advantaged families reduce their environmental impact. Once trained, volunteers apply the skills and knowledge gained from the program to help them increase the energy efficiency of their own homes. Each family assisted also gains new skills and information about the environmental impacts of carbon emissions on our health and well-being. Families also reap the benefits, on average, of a \$250 annual reduction in their utility bills.

The volunteer-based program, operated by EcoAction Arlington and Virginia Cooperative Extension, has been recognized for its innovative approach in advancing energy efficiency and stands as a model for other counties and states across the country.



Notable Recognition for the Program

In 2020, Energy Masters acknowledged the completion of energy efficiency improvements of 1000 apartments in Arlington and Alexandria.

Our cumulative impact:

- 4,809 energy efficiency light bulbs
- 13,806 outlet and light switch gaskets
- 1,123 faucet aerators
- 437 low-flow shower heads
- 315 toilet tummies
- 484 power strips and smart power strips



NATURE IN OUR COMMUNITY

The exploration of Nature in Our Community in May 2020 offered an in-depth look at the many ways Arlington County highlights the beauty and benefits of nature to our landscape and well-being. The county's commitment to renewing and enhancing the natural environment took on even more significance with the announcement that it was accepted as a partner in the Biophilic Cities Network. The partnership with Biophilic Cities establishes specific benchmarks for conserving and recognizing all forms of nature and details the benefits for all Arlington residents and visitors. A detailed presentation laid out the reasons why the county is embracing biophilia and some of the ways we can incorporate the practice into our lives.

Throughout the year, we continued to highlight the holistic benefits of nature and the deep connection between our humanity and elements of the natural world. We learned about the real-life attributes of spending time in or being surrounded by elements of nature, like decreasing stress, enhancing our cognitive skills, improving school performance, and assisting in combatting illnesses.

Familiarizing community members with the importance of nature in all forms helps EcoAction Arlington increase understanding about why we must care for our environment.

2019 EcoExtravaganza

Celebrating our waterways
from source to sea

Each year, our EcoExtravaganza brings together local supporters and environmentalists to acknowledge our work protecting the air, water, and land.

Many of the area's environmental enthusiasts and supporters gathered at the Arlington Arts Center on October 18, 2019, to acknowledge our work preserving our waterways. They were treated to local cuisine throughout the evening and heard from local leaders and proponents of nurturing and improving our natural environment. Jacob Fenston, the WAMU environment reporter, was the evening's featured speaker.



Jacob Fenston,
WAMU



(L-R) Joan McIntyre,
Brooke Oberwetter,
Elenor Hodges



2019-2020 SNAPSHOTS

POWERING ACTION WITH ADVOCACY

Individual choices can contribute to decreasing climate change and protecting our environment. Working collectively, we have an opportunity to tackle the issues that threaten our health and safety in a more holistic way. Seeking to go beyond individual actions, we created an Advocacy Committee that supports and enhances our mission through public discussion that promotes civic engagement to influence government action.

Arlington County's Community Energy Plan was one of the first significant issues the Advocacy Committee supported. The September 2019 update of the plan represents bold and expansive changes to the earlier version and positions Arlington at the forefront of jurisdictions that have made sustainability a priority. The forward-thinking plan establishes a goal for Arlington to be carbon neutral by 2050 and a shift to 100 percent renewable electricity by 2035. On a smaller scale but no less pressing, the Advocacy Committee initiated and led a petition campaign encouraging the county to establish a plastic bag tax. By organizing the Advocacy Committee, EcoAction Arlington can give voice on environmental issues to hundreds of residents in a manner we were previously unable to do.

Arlington Initiative to
**Rethink
Energy**

**CARBON
2050
NEUTRAL**

"We valued working with EcoAction Arlington and all of our stakeholders to arrive at our updated Community Energy Plan (CEP) in September 2019. Such meaningful community engagement showed how important it was to include the new renewable electricity targets and the 2050 carbon neutrality goal."

*Rich Dooley, AICP
Community Energy Coordinator*



2019-2020 PARTNERSHIPS

The support and collaboration of our partners assist in fulfilling our mission through contributions to our educational programs, parks, and waterways service projects and by joining forces for sustainability initiatives.

- Agudas Achim Congregation
- Alice Ferguson Foundation
- Amazon
- Amy Thomas Design
- Arlington Arts Center
- Arlington Chamber of Commerce Community Action Committee
- Arlington Cinema and Drafthouse
- Arlington County Department of Community Planning, Housing and Development
- Arlington County Department of Environmental Services
- Arlington County Department of Parks and Recreation
- Arlington County Public Schools Sustainability Advisory Committee
- Arlington County Urban Forestry Commission
- Arlington Independent Media
- Arlington Initiative to Rethink Energy (AIRE)
- Arlington Public Libraries
- Arlington Public Schools
- Arlington Public Schools School Health Advisory Committee
- Arlington Regional Master Naturalists
- Audubon Naturalist Society
- Bee's Wrap
- BikeArlington
- Cana Vineyards and Winery
- Capital City Sound
- Capital Nature
- Charlotte Corcoran
- Church of Latter Day Saints
- City of Alexandria Office of Housing
- Clean Virginia Waterways
- CvS Consulting
- EagleBank
- For A Strawless Sea
- George Washington's Mt. Vernon
- Gifts That Give Hope
- Heavy Seas Alehouse
- JBG SMITH
- Kol Ami: Northern Virginia Reconstructionist Community
- Leadership Center for Excellence
- Local Futures
- Meridian Pint
- NAACP, Virginia State Conference
- National Park Service
- National Wildlife Federation
- Northern Virginia Rain Barrel Program
- Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District
- Northwest Federal Credit Union
- Pacers Running
- ParcView Apartments
- Phoenix Bikes
- Potomac Conservancy
- Rock Spring Congregational United Church of Christ
- SageNet
- Serrano Apartments
- Solar United Neighbors of Virginia
- St. Matthews United Methodist Church
- St. Michaels Episcopal Church
- St. Stevens and St. Agnes School
- Sustainable Scoop
- Teen Eco Action Network
- The Story of Stuff Project
- Trade Roots
- Trader Joes
- TreeStewards
- Tudor Place
- Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington
- Urban Alliance
- US Drug Enforcement Administration
- Virginia Cooperative Extension
- Virginia Department of Forestry
- Volunteer Arlington
- Walmart
- Whole Foods
- Women's Club of Arlington



2019-2020 SPONSORSHIPS AND DONORS

EcoAction Arlington appreciates the generous support of all individuals, corporations, government agencies, foundations, civic groups, and faith communities. The following list includes donors, including those who donated goods and services, between July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2020. The names listed here represent donors who gave explicit permission for inclusion in the 2019-2020 Annual Report.

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2019-2020 DONORS

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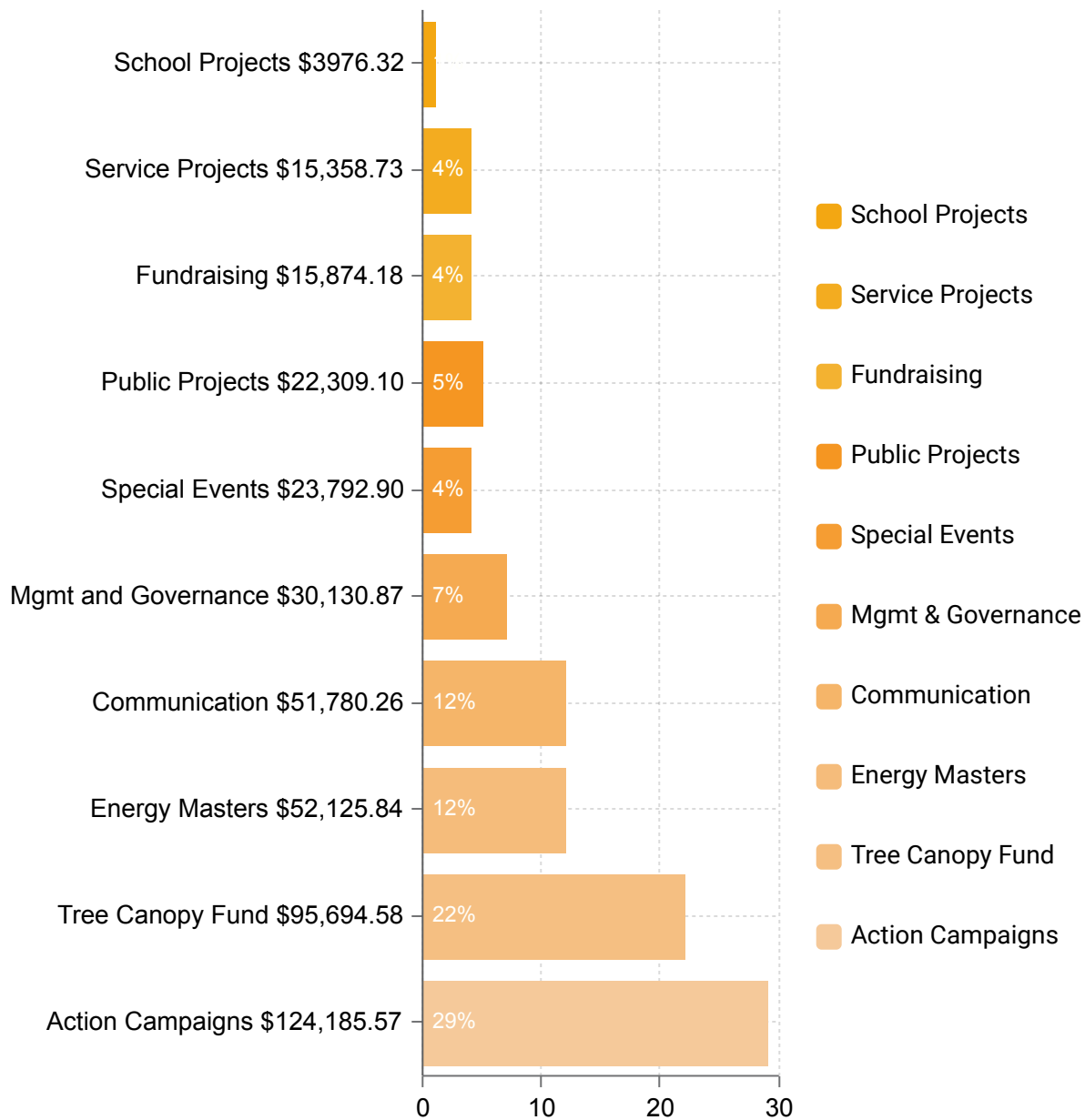
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FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

2019-2020 EXPENSES

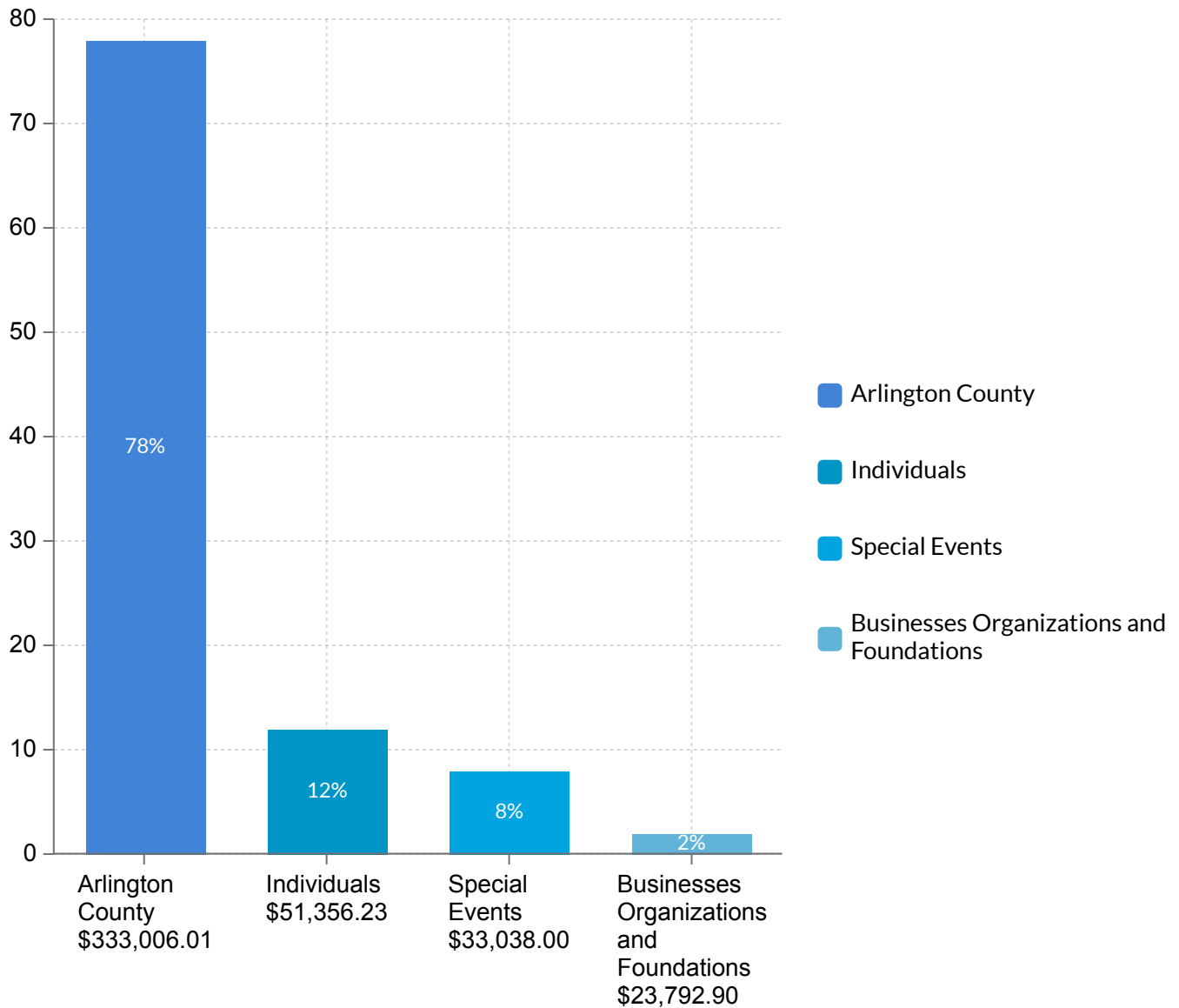


OVERALL EXPENSES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR

\$435,228.35

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

2019-2020 REVENUE



OVERALL REVENUE

\$426,186.90



ARE YOU READY TO DO MORE TO PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT?

There are so many ways to fight climate change. EcoAction Arlington, the only environmental organization solely devoted to protecting Arlington's environment, offers many ways to make our world cleaner, safe, and healthier.

Train to be an Energy Master

Help our moderate to low-income neighbors reduce their impact on the environment and gain the skills to make your own home more energy-efficient.

Participate in a stream or park cleanup

Cleanups protect wildlife and remove dangerous debris from entering our water supply.

Join an action group

Straw Free Arlington works to publicize and highlight restaurants working to decrease their use of plastics and other sustainable practices. R4 works on projects to reduce waste and improve recycling in Arlington County.

Advocate for change

Support our advocacy committee and work to advance environmental policy, laws, and guidelines.

Donate

Contribute your financial support as a one-time donor or a monthly sustainer.

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