



Topics

- [About Arlington](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Things To Do](#)
- [Today In Arlington](#)
- [Emergency Preparedness](#)
- [Arlington En Español](#)
- [Online Services](#)

ON THIS PAGE

GARDENING RESOURCES

Community Gardening Project

Resources for Arlington

- [Arlington Parks and Recreation](#)
- [Fit Arlington](#)
- [Arlington Food Assistance Center](#)
- [Neighborhood Development](#)

Resources for Virginia

- [Virginia Cooperative Extension](#)
- [Virginia Department of Social Services, Food Assistance](#)
- [Federation of Virginia Food Banks](#)
- [Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation](#)
- [Field to Fork Virginia](#)
- [Virginia Food System Council](#)

National Resources

- [Cooperative Extension](#)
- [American Community Garden Association](#)
- [National Gardening Association](#)
- [HUD Neighborhood Networks](#)
- [Community Development Block Grants](#)
- [Community Transformation Grants](#)
- [United States Federal Grants](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Healthy Communities Program](#)
- [Recommended Community Strategies and Measurements to Prevent Obesity in the United States](#)

GET IT DONE ONLINE

- [Request Mulch](#)
- [Arlington Community Gardens](#)
- [Free Seeds](#)
- [Download Community Gardening Manual](#)

Case Studies

Hopkins-Tancil Court Gardens, Alexandria

The Hopkins-Tancil Court garden project came to life through an ACHIEVE (Action Communities for Health, Innovation, and Environmental change) grant awarded by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) via the National Association of County and City Health Officials. Alexandria was selected because of the high rates of childhood obesity and lack of food access. A survey conducted by INOVA Health System found that among Alexandria children ages 2-5 years, 43.5% are overweight or obese. These numbers are significantly higher compared to older children in Alexandria (23.5% of children ages 6-10; 13.1% of children ages 11-14; 13.7% of children ages 15-18). These high rates of obesity could be associated with the large number of residents living in apartment complexes with inadequate play spaces and poor access to healthful food.

In February 2009, the *Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria* received a two-year ACHIEVE grant for \$40,000 to support a coalition building and early childhood obesity prevention initiative. Alexandria was chosen by NACCHO as one of ten demonstration sites to address chronic disease risk factors of physical inactivity and poor nutrition at the policy, systems, and environment level to reduce the burden of early childhood obesity. The *Partnership* convened health professionals, early childhood specialists, Master Gardeners, non-profits, local business, community foundations, and other partners to form the Alexandria Childhood Obesity Action Network (A-COAN).

One of A-COAN's overarching goals is to increase access to healthy food. As part of this effort, A-COAN partnered with the Alexandria Redevelopment Housing Authority (ARHA), the Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners, and a local restaurant group. The garden established at Tancil Court is located in a public housing complex, where most of the residents are African American. The project began with 36 individual plots tended by adults and one children's garden. In the gardens' second year, the number of plots was decreased to 21 in order to enlarge the gardens for the participating residents. Master Gardeners provided technical assistance to start the plots, manage the children's garden, and provide gardening information and education to adult and child participants. A consistent schedule was created to both help residents in their gardens and to learn techniques on how to use the produce in a healthy way. Along with the time spent gardening, nutrition and cooking classes were provided at a community center once a month for adults and children. Children weeded, watered, and picked produce from their garden that was then used for after school snacks. The gardening project exposed children to new types of food and fostered an understanding of where food comes from. The adults benefited from social interaction, physical activity to maintain the gardens and the cost-saving benefits of growing their own produce. Success in the project can be attributed to the support provided by the housing authority and the relationships that developed between the residents, ARHA staff, and the A-COAN planning committee members.

Virginia Gardens Apartments, Arlington

The Virginia Gardens project was started one year after the gardening project at Tancil Court. In 2010 Arlington received its own ACHIEVE grant for \$30,000 from the CDC via the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA). The success of the gardens in Alexandria inspired the Arlington Community Health Action Response Team (CHART—a committee charged with implementing the grant) to begin a similar project. The management company AHC, Inc. was approached to find a suitable apartment complex to participate in the project. AHC, Inc. manages a number of properties in Arlington that have a high population of low income residents. Seven of these properties feature community centers with active resident services staff. The Virginia Gardens property was selected based upon the interest of the residents and the availability of land for gardens. Virginia Gardens is also located in one of Arlington's Neighborhood Strategy Areas (NSA), which are neighborhoods showing the greatest need for revitalization as determined by income and socioeconomic trends.

The Arlington CHART determined that a portion of the grant should focus on creating policy and environmental changes that would improve diet and diet-related health outcomes. The garden at Virginia Gardens was one of the components and was designed to provide both access to fresh fruits and vegetables as well as cooking and nutrition classes to residents. The residents at Virginia Gardens are largely non-English speaking Hispanics/Latinos, many of whom are first generation Americans. This gardening and nutrition program was designed with the intention to create this manual to help encourage other low-income apartment complexes to implement similar gardens.

A vegetable garden was started at Virginia Gardens Apartments in the spring of 2011. Because of space limitations, this garden differs from the one at Tancil Court in that there is only one plot that residents cultivate and harvest together rather than having individual family plots. Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) staff and Master Gardener volunteers taught residents about planting and caring for the garden. In May and June VCE nutrition staff and volunteers taught four nutrition and cooking classes to residents on how to use in-season produce. Another four classes will be offered in the fall.

RELATED RESOURCES

- [Adult Sports](#)
- [FitArlington Main Page](#)
- [Get Fit](#)
- [Get Outdoors](#)
- [Healthy Vending](#)
- [Drop-In Sports](#)
- [Places to Play](#)
- [Play a Sport](#)
- [Upcoming Events](#)
- [Youth Sports](#)



[Know Your Trails video](#)

CONNECT WITH US



Last Modified: September 08, 2011

[Contact Us](#) • [Site Map](#) • [FAQs](#) • [Terms and Conditions](#) • [Accessibility](#)

2100 Clarendon Blvd. Arlington, VA22201 Tel: 703-228-3000 TTY: 703-228-4611